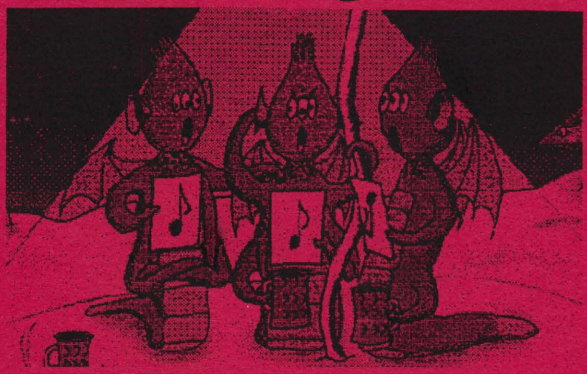
WASSAILIENS

AND OTHER UNEXPECTED NOISES



THE BOOK OF THE TAPE

CONTAINING SONGS BY

ZANDER NYROND

COUNTESS AXYLDES

TO TUNES BY

ZANDER NYROND

MIKE WHITAKER

RHODRI JAMES

AND

CHRIS O'SHEA

NOT TO MENTION

TRAD.

PUBLISHER'S RETRACTION!
THIS INFORMATION IS MISLEADING AND SHOULD BE IGNORED.

A NYROND ENTERPRISES/WNTM PIBLICATION

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Page 3 apparently had been eaten by a strange inter-dimensional creature living in the UK postal system, and adept at crawling into well-sealed envelopes and needing to consume just one page of the document contained therein to ensure it's continued survival. However it turns out that I only lost it in my scanner. I guess it's a good thing I had to scan something this morning.

This publication is © Zander Nyrond and Countess Axylides January 1999 in this particular form, though individual bits were written over a range of dates (particularly juicy dates at that - but we got all the stains out). Some of the music is © other people, and this is stated on the affected pages.

Unauthorised copying is as usual forbidden under pain of pain, or Zander looking at you in a sorrowful fashion. Yes, I know this copyright statement is very unorthodox, but that's what you get when it's written by a drummer.

BEFORE THE WORDS

or

I WAS ONLY SUPPOSED TO BE DOING A TAPE...

This book happened in the course of about a week. I was whingeing to Lissa about how I had wanted "Wassaliens"-the-tape to be out for the filkcon and, for perfectly good and logical reasons like my producer being sort of busy organising the con, it wasn't going to be, grumble moan gripe et cetera. So Lissa, being Lissa, turned a whinge into an opportunity. "Why don't you do a songbook?" she said.

Actually, when I thought about it, it wasn't that difficult. I'd already printed off quick-and-dirty scores for all but one of the songs, so all I had to do with them was add in chords and tidy up a bit. Likewise lyrics--any variant readings you may find are there on purpose to baffle twenty-second-century historians. It should have been a breeze...

"Why don't you get Jan to do some artwork?" Lissa added brightly.

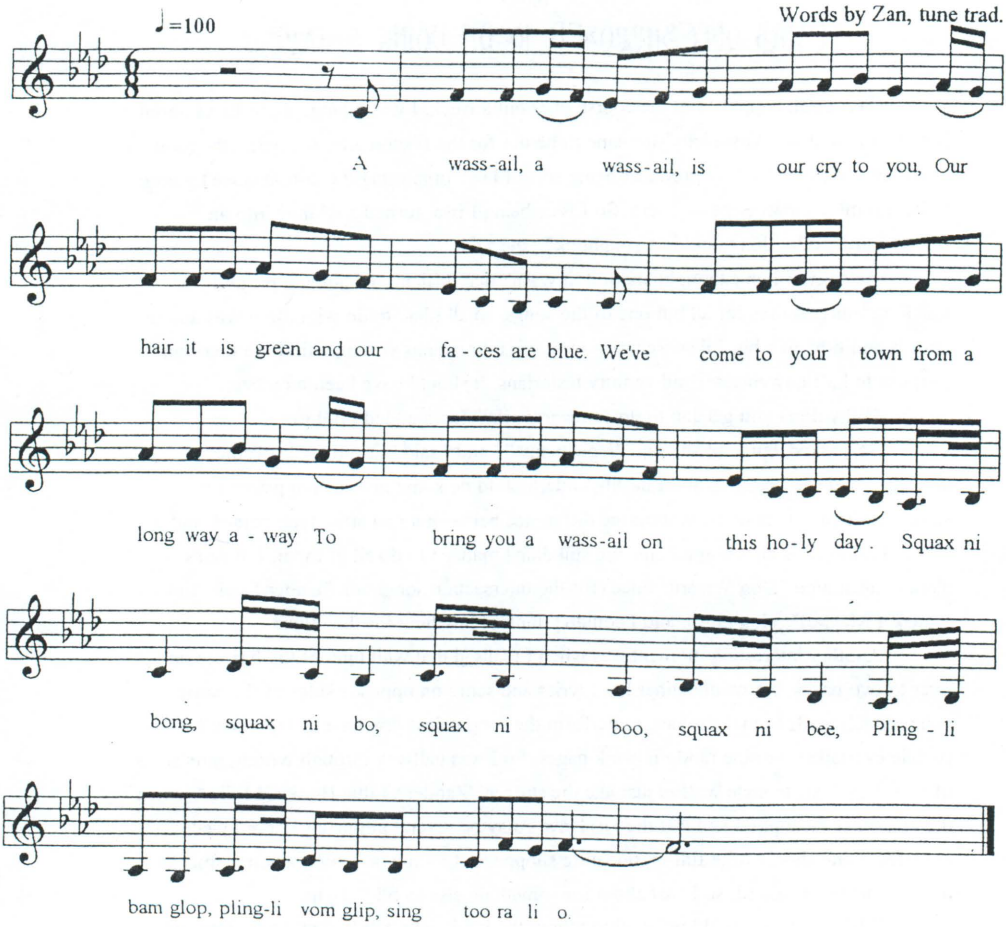
So I asked Jan, and she said "*How* many?!" and I said "Er um well seventeen, actually," and she boggled, and I hastily undertook to do some myself. No prizes for spotting which was done by whom: the difference between a real artist-type person and a Nyrond faking it is all too apparent. We still didn't manage to do all of them, but Jan's already illustrated "Dog Wizard" once (for the Intersection songbook "Under Loch And Key (Of Maybe)", plug plug), and I couldn't think of anything for the others.

Another interesting moment was when I realised that with nine of the lyrics going over to two pages, we would either have lyrics and score on opposite sides of the same page (which tends to make it hard to perform the song unless you have independently mobile eyestalks), or nine random blank pages. So I was halfway through writing nine sides of and-then-I-wrote-style waffle, just like the stuff in "Zander's Little Book Of Filks", when the computer hiccupped and lost the lot. Now I may be several intricately carved pieces of cuttlefish bone short of the full seaside gifte shoppe, but I know an omen when it smacks me athwart the mazzard, so I cast about for something else to fill the gap.

Which is why, at odd points throughout the book, you will find extracts from the Countess's **Chronicles of Mershane**, from which have come such classics as "Song of the Women," "City of Masks," "Binding Song" and three of the songs in this book. I've chosen three single-page extracts to establish the character, and a seven-page vignette to fill the rest of the space. Countess Axylides would like me to point out that this is a very rough translation of a very old manuscript, and that most of the Chronicles are much longer.

And that's about it. Thanks to Jan, Lissa, everyone who helped on the tape, and of course you. I hope you enjoy the songbook, I hope you buy (and enjoy) the tape, I hope I can come up with some new songs in time for the next filkcon, and I hope above all that I can think of some brilliantly clever and witty way to end this introduction before I run out

WASSAILENS


♩=100
Words by Zan, tune trad.
A wass-ail, a wass-ail, is our cry to you, Our
hair it is green and our fa-ces are blue. We've come to your town from a
long way a-way To bring you a wass-ail on this ho-ly day. Squax ni
bong, squax ni bo, squax ni boo, squax ni bee, Pling-li
bam glop, pling-li vom glip, sing too ra li o.

WASSALIENS

(Words by Zan, tune: "Gower Wassail"[trad.])

A wassail, a wassail, is our cry to you,
Our hair it is green and our faces are blue.
We've come to your town from a long way away
To bring you this wassail on this holy day.
CHORUS
Squax ni bong, squax ni bo, squax ni boo, squax ni bee,
Plingli bam glop, plingli vom glip, sing too ra li o.

Our wassail is made of the fuel from our drive,
Mixed with guano and toothpaste to keep it alive.
And we promise it's safe if you take it in sips:
That's exactly the way that it's fed to our ships.
CHORUS

It's we poor wassaliens up here in the cold,
When we set out your planet was not very old.
But we've studied your language so we know you understand,
So won't you have pity and please let us land.
CHORUS

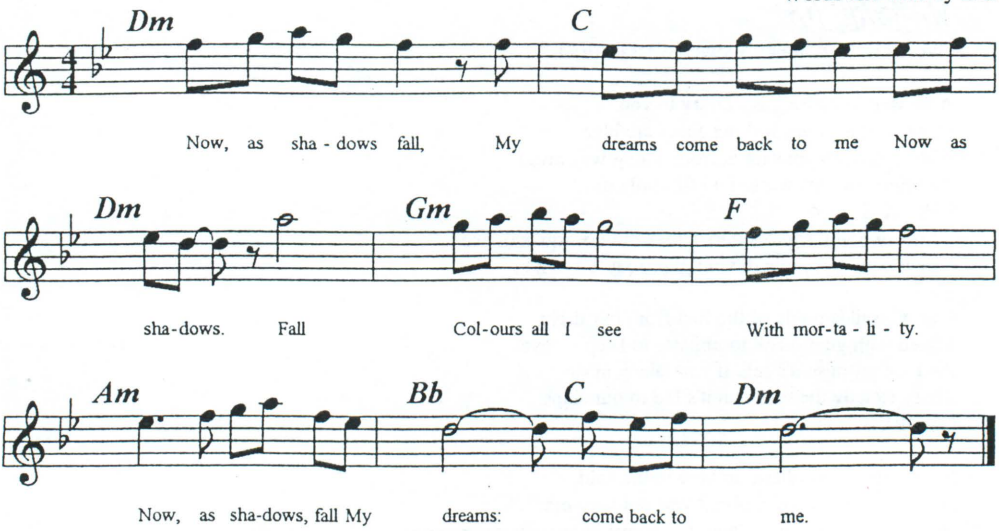
We hope that your fleeps will grow manly and tall
So that on you the guano in plenty shall fall:
And let those who mine toothpaste strike many a rich vein
So that we may wassail you when we come again.
CHORUS

We've timed our arrival with exquisite care
So that when the great day came we knew we'd be there,
To share in the worship of goodness and light
And sleep on the ground for this one blessed night.
CHORUS

We'll stay but one night and then be on our way
Round the curve of the cosmos for many's the day:
Our course is predestined, we can't turn our drive,
But we'll come round again should your species survive.
CHORUS

TRIOLET

Words and tune by Zan



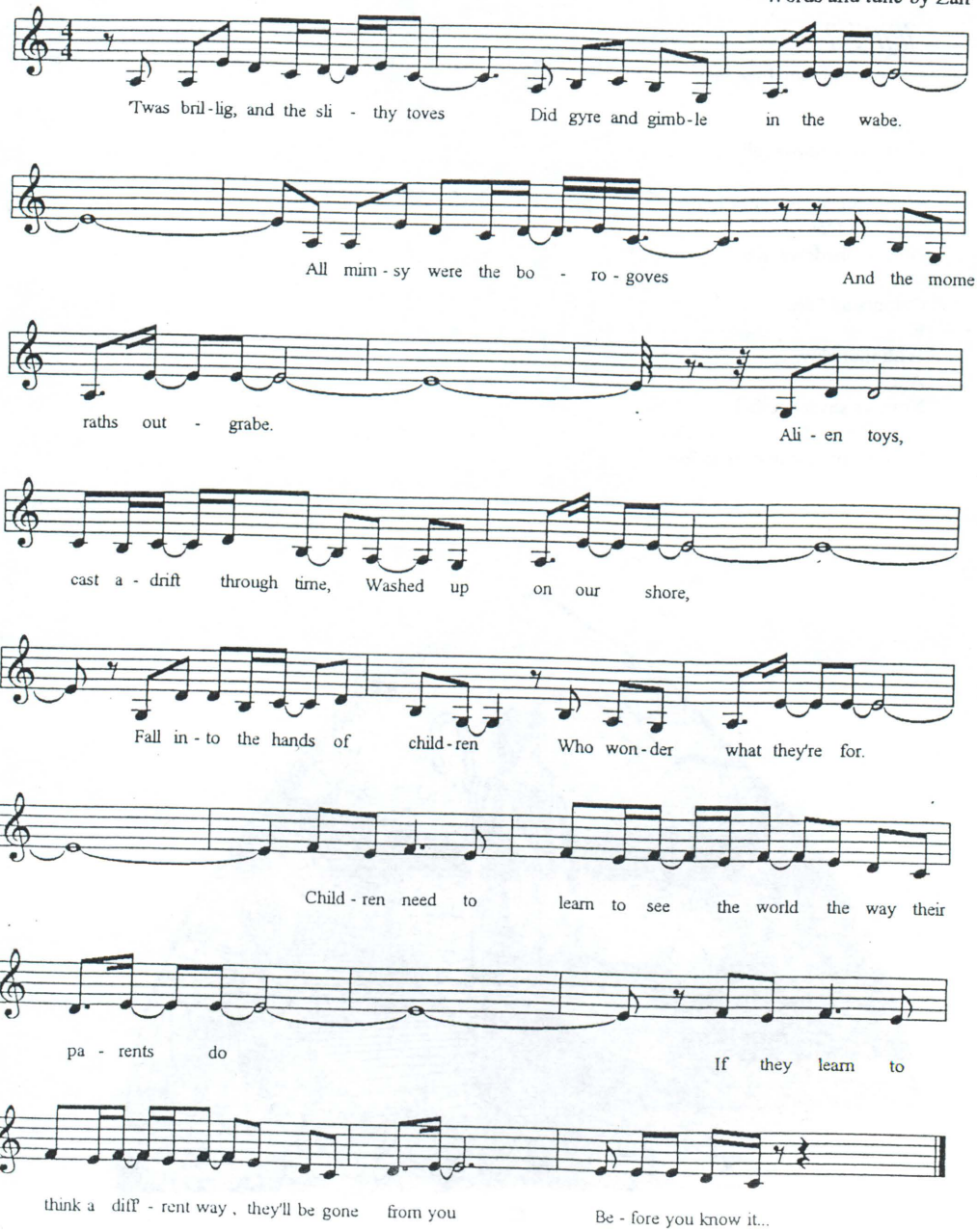
TRIOLET

(Words and tune by Zan)

Dm
Now, as shadows fall,
C
My dreams come back to me
Dm
Now as shadows. Fall
Gm
Colours all I see
F
With mortality.
Am
Now, as shadows, fall
Bb C Dm
My dreams: come back to me.

MIMSY WERE THE BOROGOVES

Words and tune by Zan



MIMSY WERE THE BOROGOVES

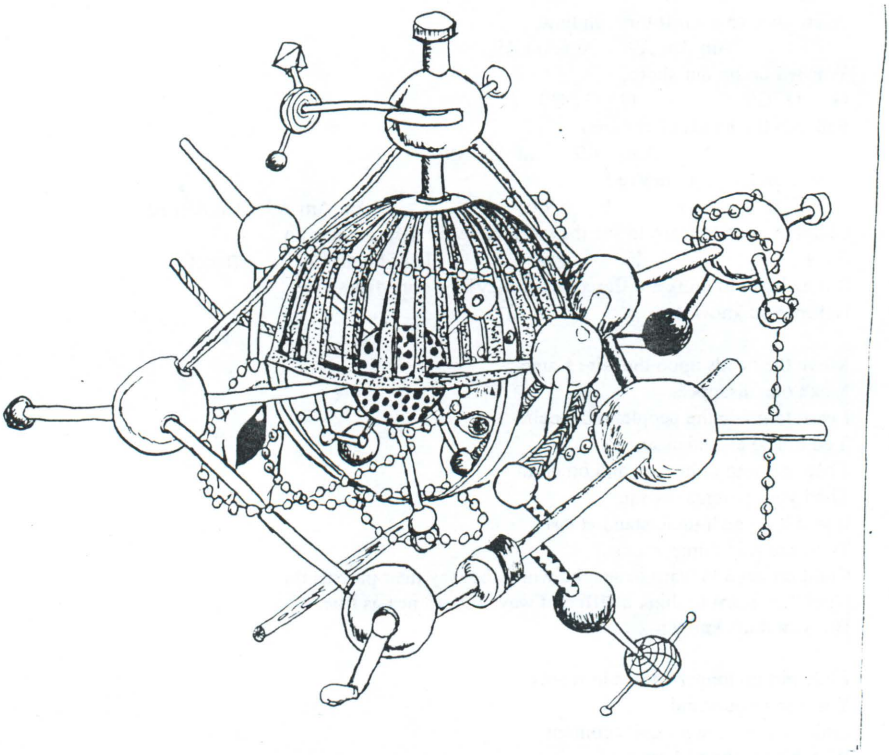
(Words and tune by Zan: inspired by a Henry Kuttner story of the same name)

Am Am A9 Am Am
'T was brillig, and the slithy toves
A9 Am Am A9 Am Am A9
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.
Am Am A9 Am Am A9
All mimsy were the borogoves
Am Am A9 Am Am A9
And the mome raths outgrabe.
G G G9 G G G9
Alien toys, cast adrift through time,
Am Am A9 Am Am A9
Washed up on our shore,
G G G9 G G G9
Fall into the hands of children
Am Am A9 Am Am A9
Who wonder what they're for.
F F Fb5 F F Fb5 Am Am A9 Am Am A9
Children need to learn to see the world the way their parents do
F F Fb5 F F Fb5 Esus4 Esus4 E E(tacet)
If they learn to think a different way, they'll be gone from you
Before you know it...

Move the beads upon the wire frame
Make one disappear.
Learn to guide the people in the cube
You see so crystal clear.
There is more in heaven and on earth
Than your parents dream.
If you try, you'll understand at last
'Bout the way things seem.
Children need to learn to see the world the way their parents do
Now they learn to think a different way, and it's just as true,
But you don't know it...

Little girl no longer speaks in words
You can understand.
Little boy, no longer quite content
With his blocks and sand.
One dark night, you hurry to their room
Wakened by a cry,
Just in time to watch them fade away
Who knows where or why (where or why)
Children need to learn to see the world the way their parents do
These two learned to think a different way and now they're gone from you.
How could you know it?

Alien toys, cast adrift through time,
Washed up in the reeds.
Little girl tries to tell her friend
'Bout the sliding beads.
'T was brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.
All mimsy were the borogoves
And the mome raths outgrabe.
And the mome raths outgrabe.
And the mome raths outgrabe.
Outgrabe!



FROM THE CHRONICLES OF MERSHANE.....1

"Begin at the beginning," Severin Torrent, Commander-Elect of Security, said encouragingly, with one of his rare smiles. "It's always the best in the long run, even if later you find the beginning really belongs somewhere else. I always find it does. Historically speaking, reality is like that, and I assume we are dealing with some level of reality, eventually."

He was a tall man, grey, iron-grey, with an inner strength to him that originated in his iron will and permeated his body. Grey eyes, iron-grey hair already streaked with white although he was only in his mid-forties. Hawk-faced, with long hands, neatly manicured, on which his seal-ring gleamed dully as he folded his hands carefully on the smooth air-shot marble of his desk. He had held this seat, this sombre, colourless, humourless office now for five years. It was an achievement; few envied him his job, but all acknowledged the fact that he had maintained peace in the Fringes for five years and he had survived.

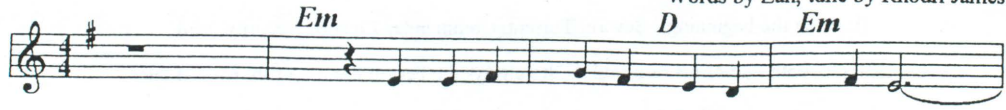
There had been many Security officers Darkside, but the people who lived in the quadrant designated officially as K47-B97, known unofficially as the Fringes, did not like Security, did not believe the policing officers were unbiased, did not trust the governing authority of the Coreworlds that sent them, and had no overburdening of loyalty to the Unity of the United Systems of Ur. Until the advent of Severin Torrent, the survival rate for those unfortunate enough to hold this office had been low. The previous Commander-Elect had lived a mere eighteen months. By such standards Torrent was a complete success. His methods, like his private life, were totally unorthodox, but Command Central were wise enough to judge by results, whatever public or political opinion might like to believe: and Torrent got results.

Severin regarded the Trader before him, little more than a child, and repeated, "Now, my dear, tell me exactly what happened."

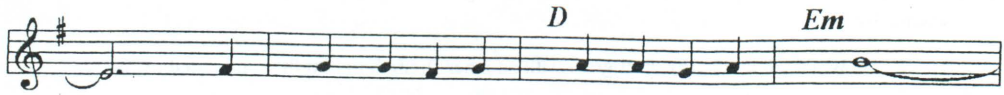
*

CWMRYN EVEN MAWR

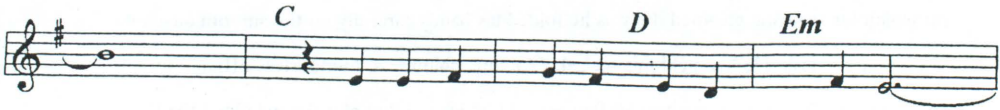
Words by Zan, tune by Rhodri James



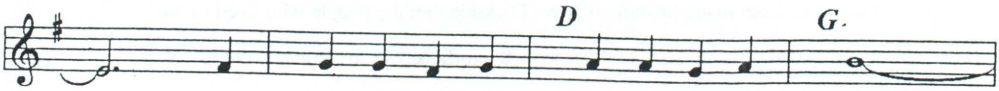
There is a ci - ty in the fo - rest



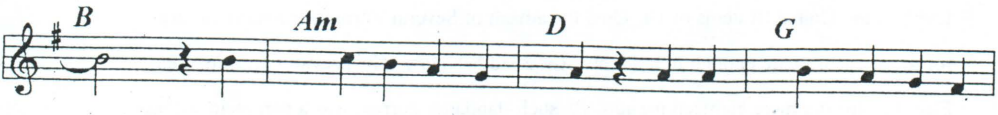
Sur - round - ed by the dwell - ings of the elves



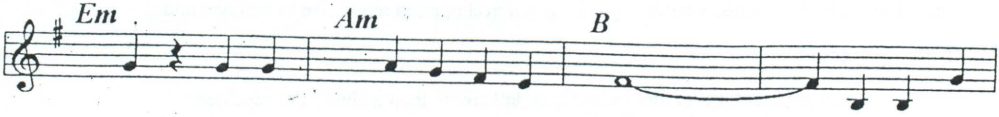
We were the peo - ple of that ci - ty



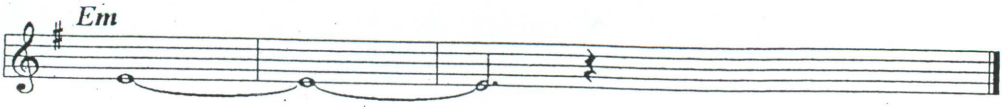
And lived there most - ly keep - ing to our - selves



Un - til the elves went nuts And re - moved most of our



guts Left us ly - ing in our huts In Cwm - ryn



Mawr.

CWMRYN EVEN MAWR

(Words by Zan, tune: "Cwmryn Mawr" by Rhodri James)

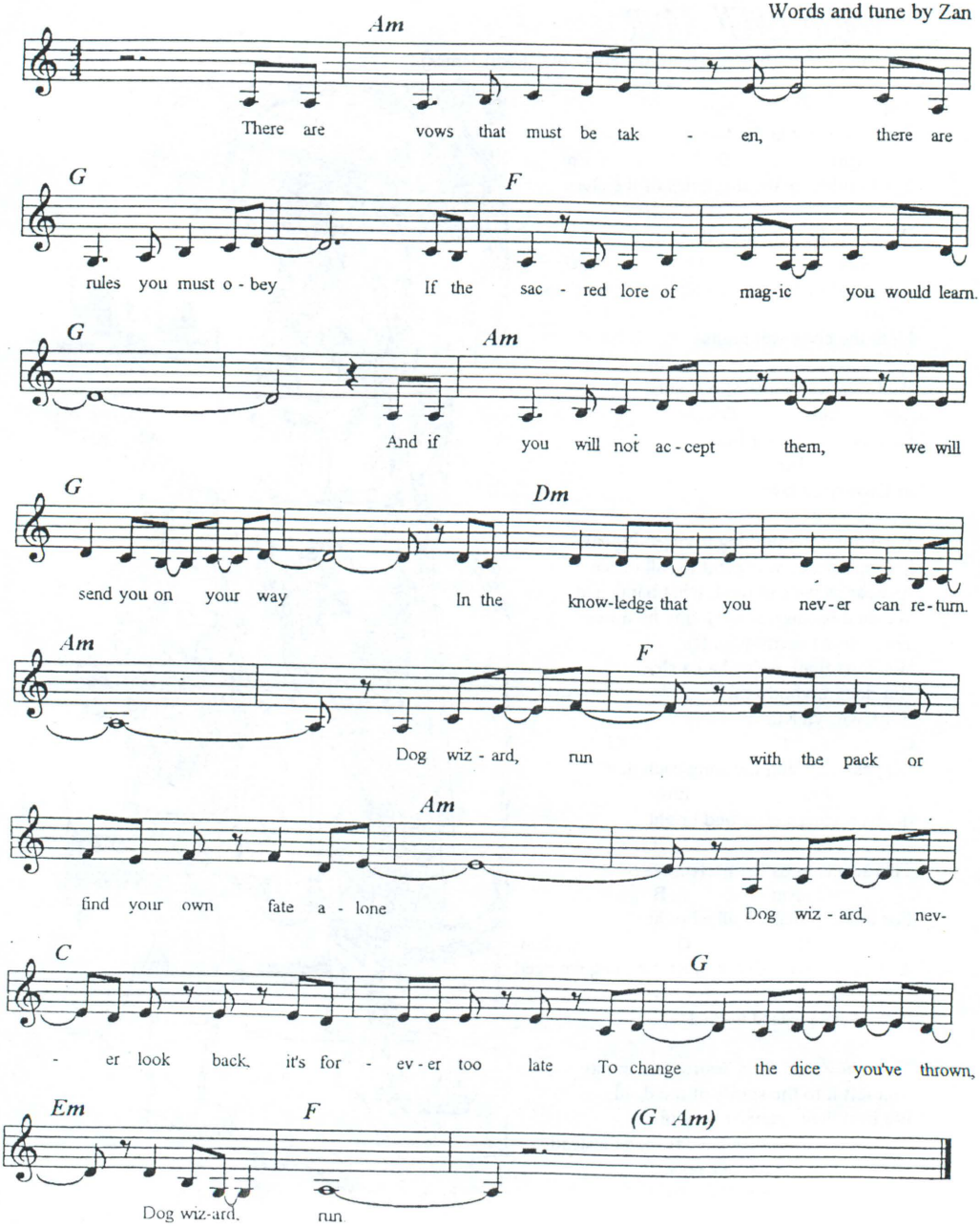
Em D Em
There is a city in the forest
Em D Em
Surrounded by the dwellings of the elves
C D Em
We were the people of that city
Em D G B
And lived there mostly keeping to ourselves
Am D
Until the elves went nuts
G Em
And removed most of our guts
Am B
Left us lying in our huts
Em
In Cwmryn Mawr.

We'd not done nothing to offend them
Our innocence was plain for all to see
As near as we can think what happened
We died because some loony hit a tree
This doesn't seem quite fair
We don't think we've had a share
But does anybody care
For Cwmryn Mawr?
C D G
Oh yes, they sing the song each day
Am Em
In elven voices clear and bright.
C D G
This seems to us the perfect way
Am B
For them to make it all all right.
Am D G Em
A choir of elves is really just the thing we need
Am B
We're very pleased indeed...

That's how the elves destroyed our city
And left it to the spirits of the dead
We find their grieving very pretty
But think we'd rather have revenge instead
So tonight we leave our post
And confront them elf to ghost
And by dawn they'll all be toast
In Cwmryn Mawr!

DOG WIZARD

Words and tune by Zan



DOG WIZARD

(Words and tune by Zan: inspired by Barbara Hambly's Dog Wizard books)

Am Am Am Am G G Am Am

```
            Am
There are vows that must be taken,
            G
There are rules you must obey
    F                   G
If the sacred lore of magic you would learn.
    Am                  G
And if you will not accept them, we will send you on your way
    Dm                  Am
In the knowledge that you never can return.

CHORUS
        F                       Am
Dog wizard, run with the pack or find your own fate alone
        C
Dog wizard, never look back, it's forever too late
  G             Em
To change the dice you've thrown,
        F     (F G Am Am)
Dog wizard, run.
```

If you break the vows we ask of you, if you spurn the gift we give,
We will make your treason known to one and all.
No lord will give you shelter, no land will let you live,
You will scramble for the scraps that we let fall.

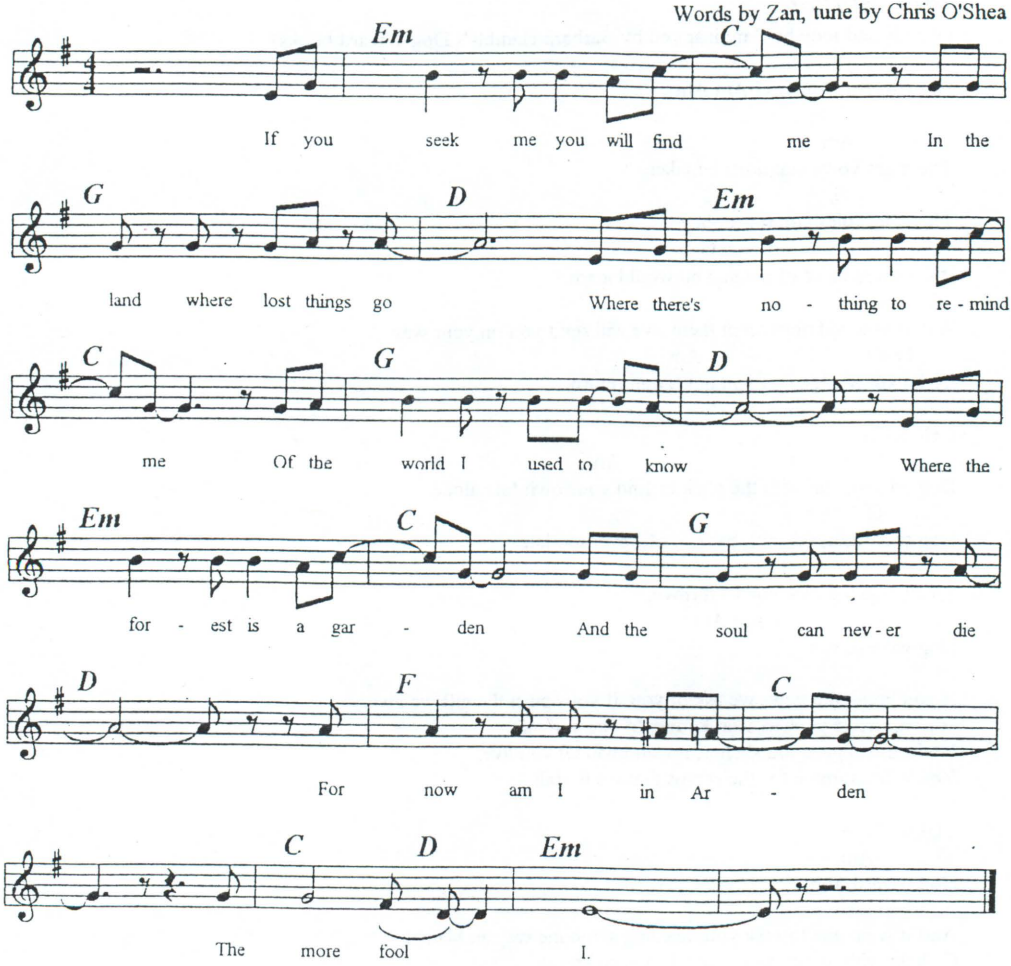
```
CHORUS +
 G       Am
Dog wizard, run.
```

And if we come to seek you, needing someone we can blame,
Or help with things we're not allowed to know,
Don't believe that coming quietly will give a dog a better name,
Just be thankful if we deign to let you go.

```
CHORUS
        F   Dm
Dog wizard, run...
        Em  F
Dog wizard, run...
        Dm  Em
Run, dog, run...
          F   Dm
Why don't you run...
```

ARDEN

Words by Zan, tune by Chris O'Shea



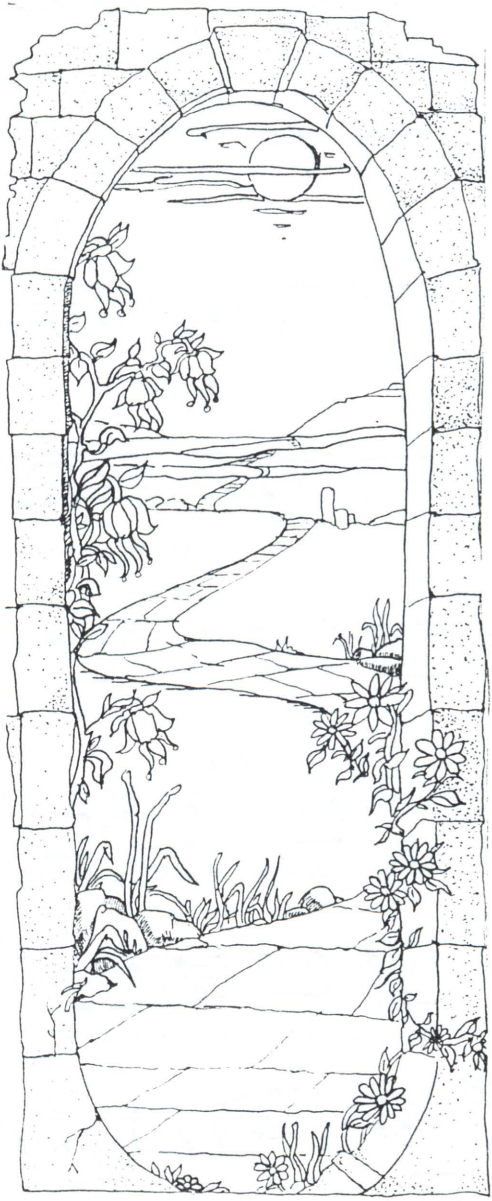
ARDEN

(Words by Zan, tune by Chris O'Shea: inspired by a line from **As You Like It**)

```
      Em                C
If you seek me you will find me
      G                     D
In the land where lost things go
                Em          C
Where there's nothing to remind me
      G                 D
Of the world I used to know
              Em        C
Where the forest is a garden
      G                 D
And the soul can never die
    F           C
For now am I in Arden
      C   D   Em
The more fool I.
```

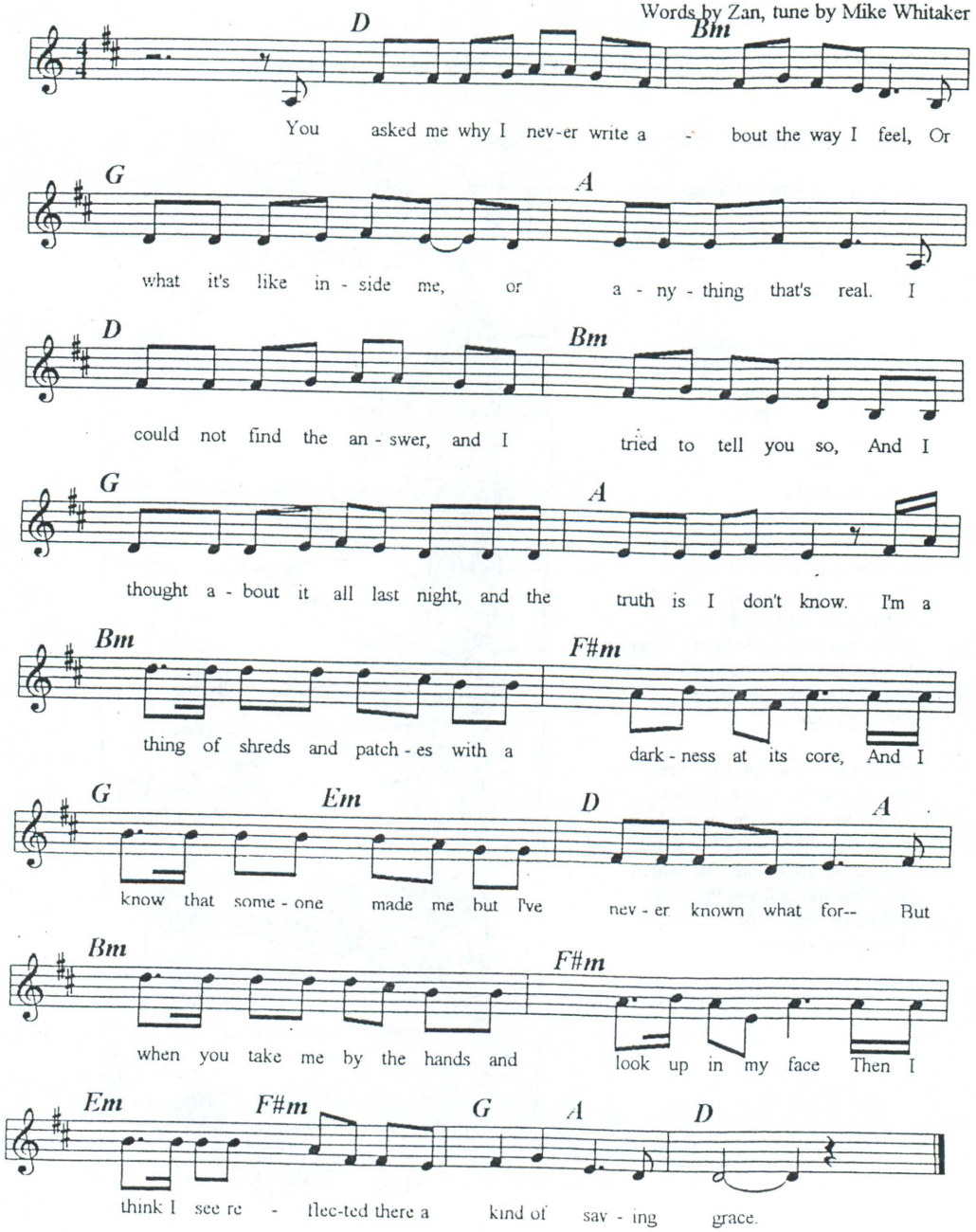
When I left the world behind me
And the wind took me in hand
There was light enough to blind me
As I crossed into this land
Where the stones cried out for pardon
And the flowers wondered why
And I knew I was in Arden
The more fool I.

If you sought me you have found me
But the quest has cost you dear
For the light that burns around me
Will have robbed you of your fear
And before your heart can harden
The wind will pull you through
And you'll join me here in Arden
The more fool you.



SAVING GRACE

Words by Zan, tune by Mike Whitaker



SAVING GRACE
(A SONG FOR TAILS)

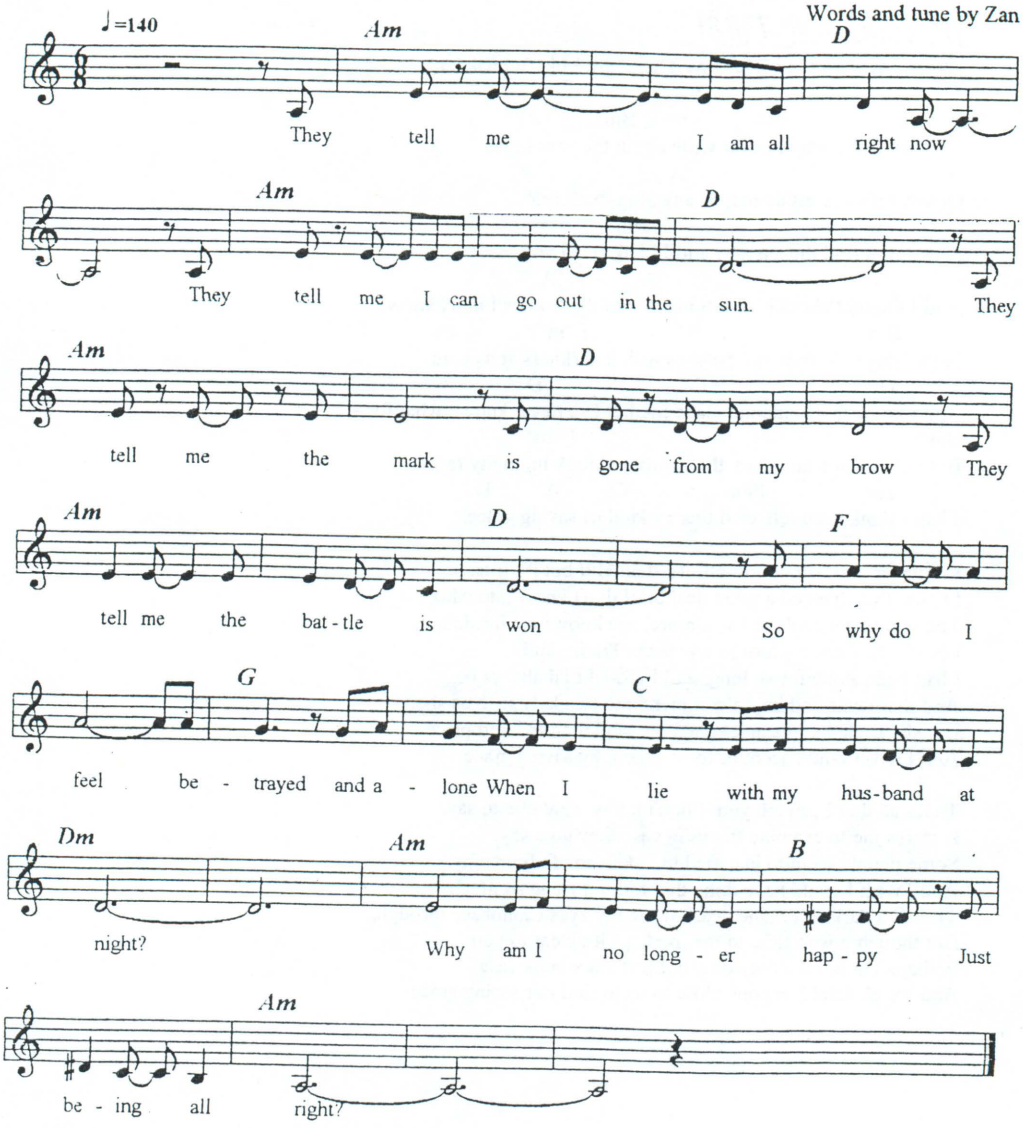
(Words by Zan, tune "Halfway There" by Mike Whitaker)

```
     D                          Bm
You asked me why I never write about the way I feel,
G                          A
Or what it's like inside me, or anything that's real.
  D                          Bm
I could not find the answer, and I tried to tell you so,
       G                          A
And I thought about it all last night, and the truth is I don't know.
      Bm                          F#m
I'm a thing of shreds and patches with a darkness at its core,
      G                  Em              D                  A7
And I know that someone made me but I've never known what for--
Bm                                     F#m
But when you take me by the hands and look up in my face
      Em          F#m          G     A     D
Then I think I see reflected there a kind of saving grace.
```

I've never understood myself, it's shameful but it's true.
I know I've changed a good deal but I don't know into who.
The one I love could tell you more, she knows me inside out,
For it's she I always turn to whenever I'm in doubt.
I had been alone for so long, and I thought I'd always be,
And there was nothing to commend me to a lady such as she.
But she smiled at me and kissed me, and it all fell into place,
And I never could account for it except by saving grace.

That's all that I can tell you: I don't know what else to say.
It scares me to examine things in case they go away.
Some people seem to like me but I still can't fathom why,
And I wish I could have done this without using so much "I"...
There's a darkness at the heart of me my eyes cannot see through,
But though it isn't clear to me, perhaps it's clear to you.
Perhaps I'm not the only one, but just a textbook case,
And we all need someone close to us to find our saving grace.

MINA'S SONG


♩=140
Words and tune by Zan
Am
D
They tell me I am all right now
Am
D
They tell me I can go out in the sun. They
Am
D
tell me the mark is gone from my brow They
Am
D
F
tell me the bat - tle is won So why do I
G
C
feel be - trayed and a - lone When I lie with my hus-band at
Dm
Am
B
night? Why am I no long - er hap - py Just
Am
be - ing all right?

MINA'S SONG

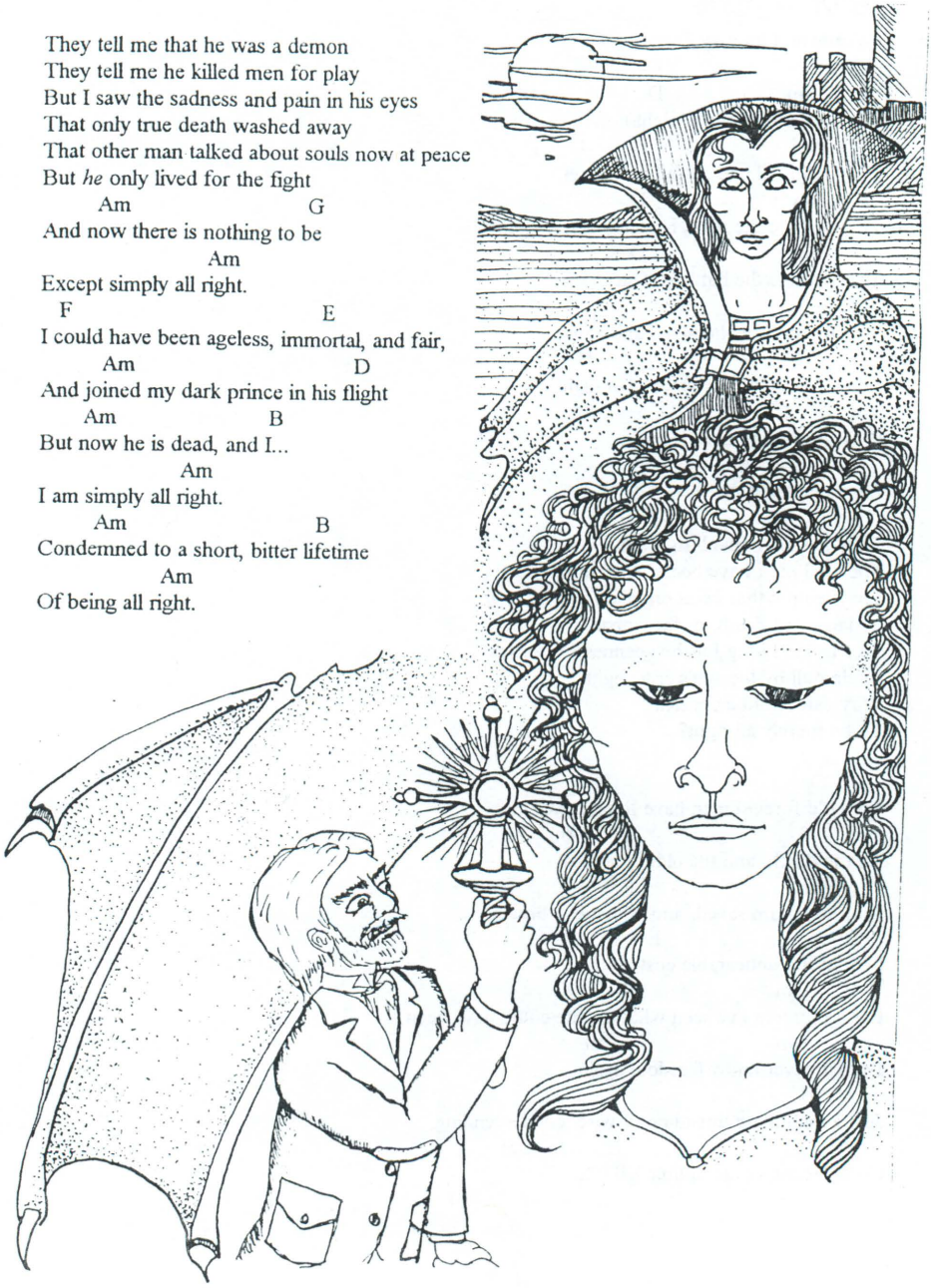
(Words and tune by Zan)

```
      Am                D
They tell me...I am all right now
      Am                        D
They tell me I can go out in the sun.
      Am                D
They tell me the mark is gone from my brow
      Am                D
They tell me the battle is won
    F                G
So why do I feel betrayed and alone
        C                      D
When I lie with my husband at night?
Am                    B
Why am I no longer happy
                Am
Just being all right?

They tell me I am all right now
They tell me I have beaten the curse
They tell me that I was enslaved to the Devil
In danger of death, or far worse
So why do I long for the keenness of senses
Made dull by the sun's cruel light?
Why can I not be content
To be merely all right?

      Dm                    F
Two old foreign men have fought over me
       G7                        Am
To the death, and the older man lost
     Dm                    F
And now I am saved, and with every breath
   Bb                    E
I count the unbearable cost
         Dm                        G
For a moment I've seen what my life could have been
         Am                    Dm
But I'll never know freedom again
        B
Just a nightmare unending of wise, condescending,
                              E     (pause)
Complacent, contemptible MEN...
```

They tell me that he was a demon
They tell me he killed men for play
But I saw the sadness and pain in his eyes
That only true death washed away
That other man talked about souls now at peace
But *he* only lived for the fight
Am G
And now there is nothing to be
Am
Except simply all right.
F E
I could have been ageless, immortal, and fair,
Am D
And joined my dark prince in his flight
Am B
But now he is dead, and I...
Am
I am simply all right.
Am B
Condemned to a short, bitter lifetime
Am
Of being all right.



Severin Torrent did not open his eyes, but lay in the darkness of his room, tensed and waiting, sleep a mere feint. As he listened, the faintest of sounds reached his ear and he was certain. There was someone in his room. Someone had broken in through the security network that was meant for his protection, and had penetrated right to the heart of that system, to Severin Torrent's own bedroom, to Severin Torrent himself. This someone had done so without authorisation, and was even now moving with incredible stealth towards the bed. There was only one reason Severin knew of for such behaviour, and it boded no good for him.

The assassin was closer now. With patience Severin had not known he had left, he waited. If the other came close enough he might have a chance, a slim chance to defend himself. If the assassin were a professional, if he were a traditionalist, if...if... There were too many ifs, Severin realised, and quietly prayed the man would use something from which he could defend himself.

A shaft of thin light touched the darkness, illuminating the edge of a crystal slayzar blade as it moved across the assassin's body in a strange gesture. Severin exercised all his will-power and did not hold his breath, but kept the rhythm of his breathing even, feigning sleep. Still he waited and still the intruder did not come closer. Quiet, half-suppressed sounds mocked him for a moment; then realisation slowly dawned as he recognised the slither of material as it was eased carefully over limbs and draped over the chair at the end of his bed. He did not understand then, not even when his brain told him the intruder was very quietly stripping. He did not dare believe even when the traitorous light dimly outlined the lithe figure of a tall youth and highlighted the softness of the all too pale skin.

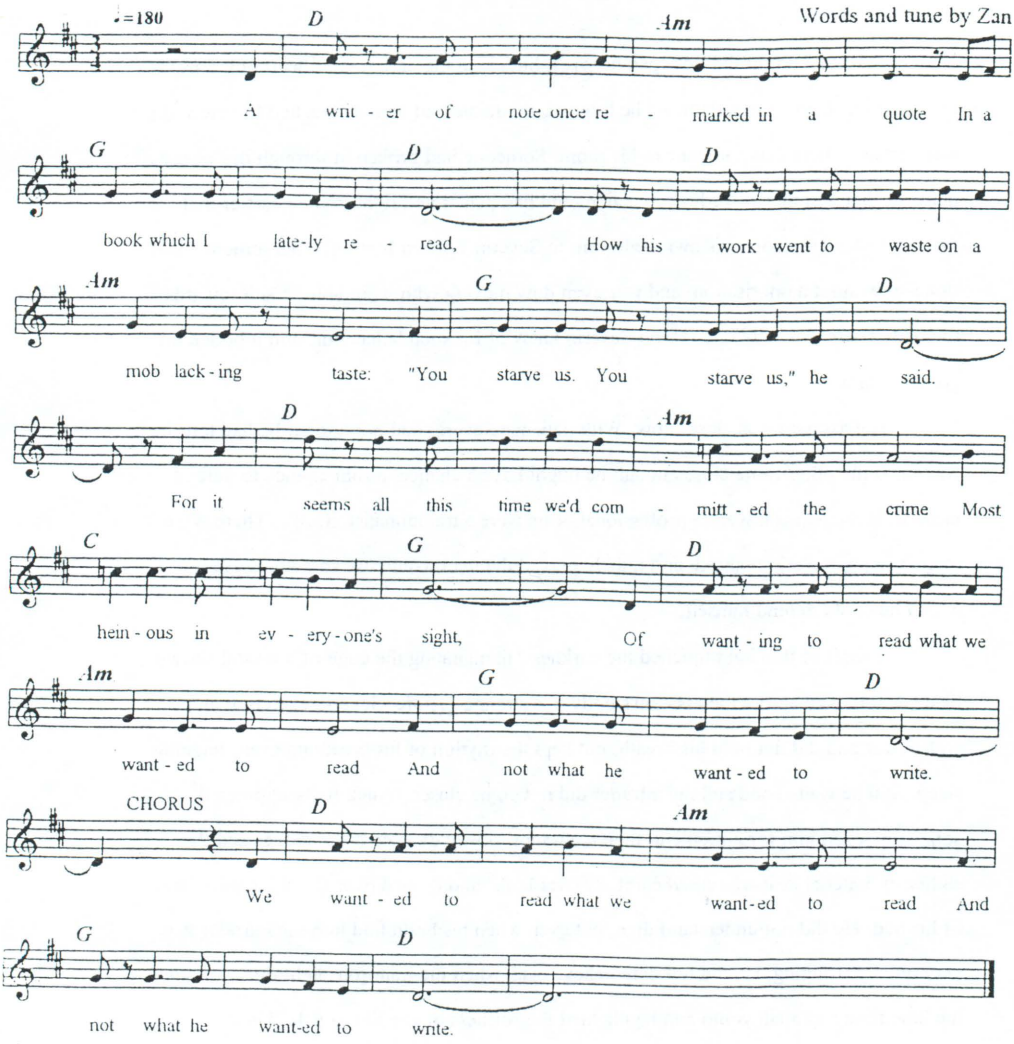
The intruder came closer then, bare feet soundless on the thick carpet by his bed, stooping slightly, empty hands reaching down, and then the heart-rendingly familiar voice that whispered:

"Oh, you're awake then. Move over."

Mer had kept his promise. He had come back.

*

SONG OF THE TYRANTS



SONG OF THE TYRANTS

(Words and tune by Zan)

```
  D                    Am
A writer of note once remarked in a quote
    G                    D
In a book which I lately re-read,
        D                    Am
How his work went to waste on a mob lacking taste:
      G                    D
"You starve us. You starve us," he said.
      D                    Am
For it seems all this time we'd committed the crime
      C                    G
Most heinous in everyone's sight,
    D                    Am
Of wanting to read what we wanted to read
      G                    D
And not what he wanted to write.
CHORUS
      D                    Am
We wanted to read what we wanted to read
      G                    D
And not what he wanted to write.
```

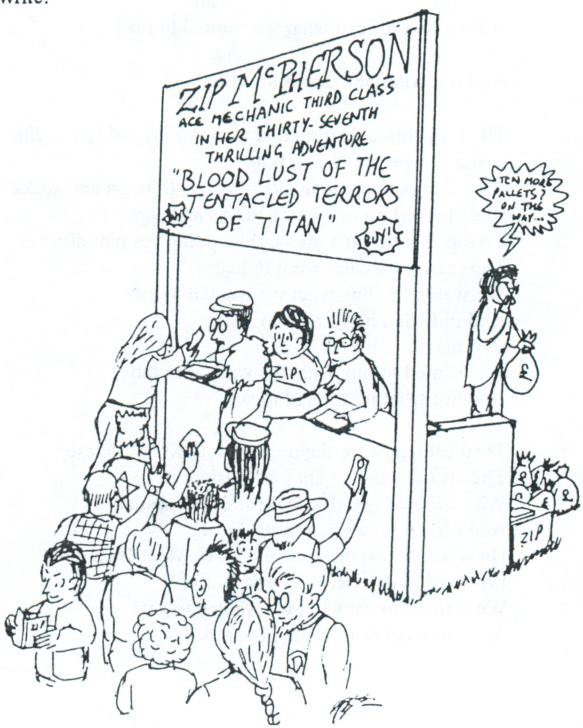
Then my thoughts turned at whim to my old Uncle Jim
A storekeeper of local repute
Who dumped all his stocks of men's trousers and socks
And stocked up on old tea leaves and soot.
To this day he can't guess, though it gives him distress,
The reason his sales went to hell:
We wanted to buy what we wanted to buy
And not what he wanted to sell.
CHORUS
We wanted to buy what we wanted to buy
And not what he wanted to sell.

Then I thought for the nonce about M. Alphonse,
The award-winning chef de cuisine,
Who decided one day that food was passe
And served up a scrap metal terrine.
He was fired on the spot and he howled "It's a plot!"
So we tried to explain--we said "Look,
We wanted to eat what we wanted to eat
And not what you wanted to cook."

CHORUS
We wanted to eat what we wanted to eat
And not what he wanted to cook.
(Instrumental, inc. bergomask dance by members of the company)

Oh you writers, beware, and, since I must be fair,
Oh you artists and architects too.
Let your muse guide you on, but remember anon,
In the long run it's we who pays you.
Innovation is ace in its time and its place
But the public will always backslide
Into wanting to want what we wanted to want
Not what you may want to provide.

So in every new job, stay in touch with "the mob",
Don't leave us behind in your flight,
And you'll find that we'll read what you want us to read
When you write what we want you to write.
CHORUS
You'll find that we'll read what you want us to read
When you write what we want you to write!



FROM THE CHRONICLES OF MERSHANE.....3

The Loonite lurched uncertainly into the half-light and blinked. It was raw dawn outside the Taverna Vardis, Port-side of Salak, but the Dream-addled youth carried the blue-stained vision of a drug overdose inside his brain as well as his cornea and iris. He was, as any observant inhabitant of the Scald would note, suffering a self-induced surfeit of the legal abomination, Blue Dreamer. A passing observer would also have been able to inform a tourist that the Loonite was male, a Fringer with excessive mutant strains, tall, over two metres, pretty, with a wild mane of blue-black hair spangled with green, and that he was Clanley. A second glance would reveal that despite the bedraggled state of his Clanley cloak, he was rich. White gold glittered on his fingers, rings of alien design and strange gemstones clustered about his fingers. His pointed ears were pierced with gold and emerald drops, and he carried a Scald-knife and one of the illegal slayzar blades sheathed at his side.

A security-minded Scat observed the Loonite, approached the young man with wary curiosity amd hauled him unceremoniously out of the gutter. The Loonite wavered blearily and leant heavily on her supporting arm. "Easy, sira," the Scat murmured. "You're well out of your way here, aren't you, and the Scald is not the safest place for a gentleman of your breeding and wealth, is it now?"

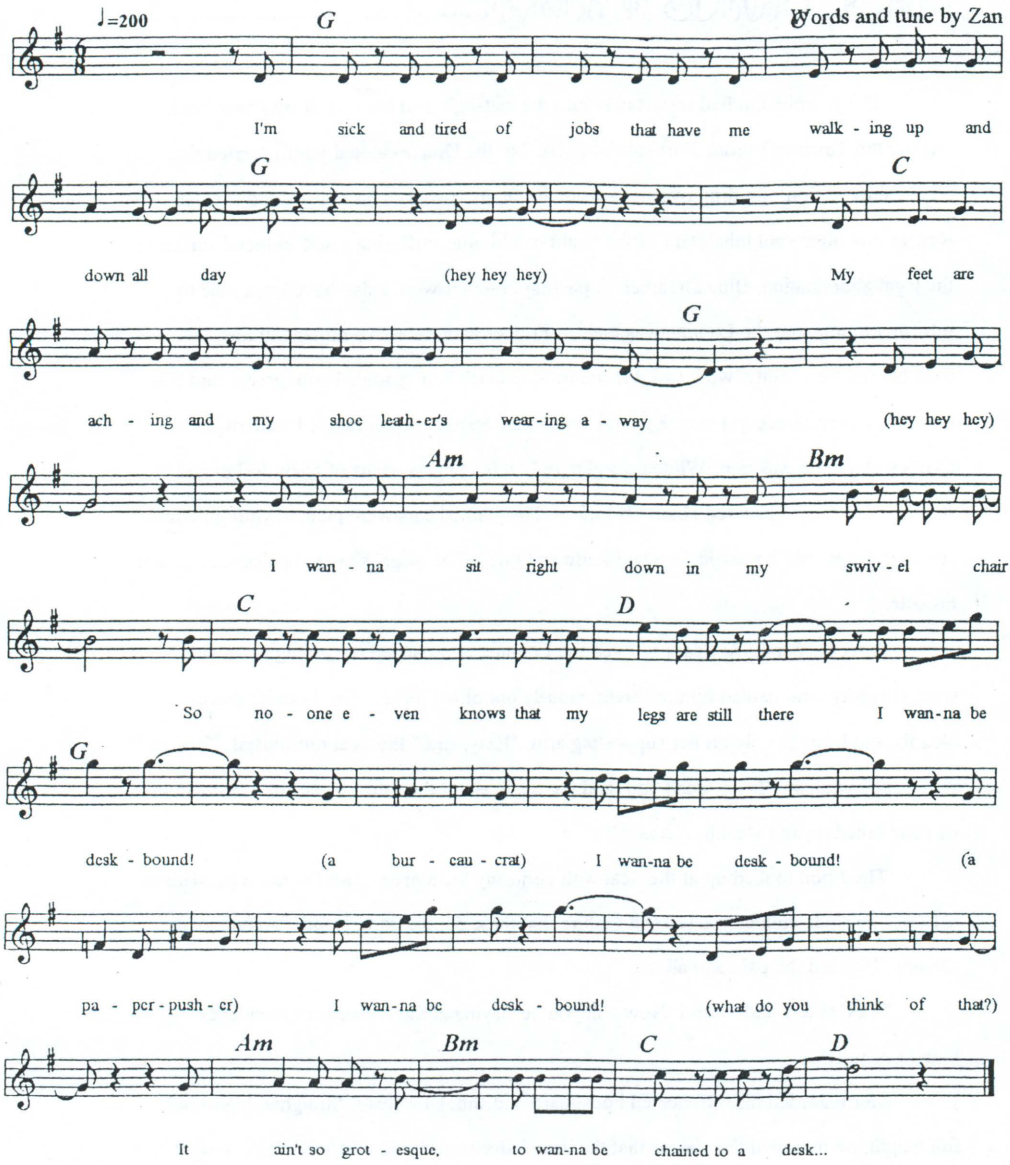
The Loon looked up at the Scat with curiously lucid eyes. "But I'm not a gentleman, officer," he said, smiling in a learned gesture that these people understood. "Actually I'm Clanley. Beyond the pale and all that."

"Yes, sira, I understand. Now will you be staying at the Governor's Residency tonight or not?"

Mer regarded his self-elected bodyguard and shook his head. Straightening to his full height, he dispelled the visions that the drug induced and said wistfully, "Not tonight, pussycat, I'm officially sulking." Then, with the dignity of the prince he sometimes was, Mershane Bringer sought sanctuary amid familiar shadows.

*

DESKBOUND


♩=200
G
Words and tune by Zan
I'm sick and tired of jobs that have me walk - ing up and
G
C
down all day (hey hey hey) My feet are
G
ach - ing and my shoe leath - er's wear - ing a - way (hey hey hey)
Am
Bm
I wan - na sit right down in my swiv - el chair
C
D
So no - one e - ven knows that my legs are still there I wan - na be
G
desk - bound! (a bur - cau - crat) I wan - na be desk - bound! (a
pa - per - push - er) I wan - na be desk - bound! (what do you think of that?)
Am
Bm
C
D
It ain't so grot - esque, to wan - na be chained to a desk...

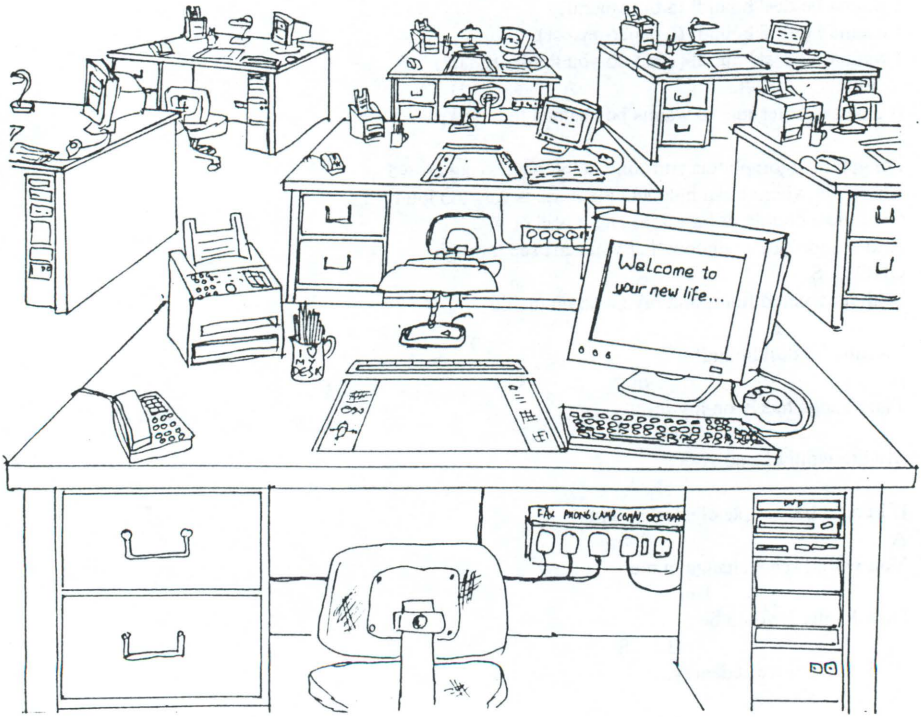
DESKBOUND

(Words and tune by Zan)

```
     E                                  A                          E
I'm sick and tired of jobs that have me walking up and down all day
     A                                                        E
My feet are aching and my shoe leather's wearing away
          F#m                    G#m
I wanna sit right down in my swivel chair
     A                              B
So no-one even knows that my legs are still there
CHORUS
                E
I wanna be deskbound! (a bureaucrat)
I wanna be deskbound! (a paper-pusher)
I wanna be deskbound! (what do you think of that?)
   F#m        G#m                      A          B
It ain't so grotesque, to wanna be chained to a desk...

I'm getting agoraphobia surrounded by the heaving crowd
There's nowhere I can hide and the noise is way too loud
Give me a couple of partitions and a wall or two
And a door and a window that you can't see through
CHORUS
With a carpeted floor, and my name on the door,
               E
I wanna be deskbound!
A                          C#m
Time hangs heavy on my feet
                        F#m
My life would be so sweet
                     D      E
If I could be completely deskbound
A                            F#m
You would see a change in me
                        Bm
How happy I would be
                          B     E
If my work were sedent'ry...
(E    A     F#   B)
```

So take me to a place where bureaucracy has got out of hand
Where I won't have to stand for always having to stand
Where the desks are tidy and the phones are clean
And I'm a tiny little cog in a great big machine
CHORUS
You're never alone, with a phone of your own...
CHORUS
In a suit and a tie, I know I'd get by,
A carpeted floor and my name on the door,
I won't go beresk, if I can be chained to a desk,
I wanna be deskbound!!!



FROM THE CHRONICLES OF MERSHANE.....4

The white-clad woman knelt quietly before the silent statue. Around her the votive lights flickered against the growing darkness. Her back ached but she did not move; only her fingers on the bone beads counted out the gentle rhythm of her prayer.

"Lord Bringer," the lips shaped inaudibly, "hear the supplication of this the least of thy servants, and grant me strength to do now what I must do. Forgive me my weakness and my betrayal. Help me now, for I am afraid, afraid, sweet Lord, I am afraid."

The statue gazed down with stark blind eyes of unyielding stone. Only the stones' compassion watched her desperation mounting, and stone can give nothing of its own mortality to the less substantial creature of flesh. The skin, too taut over strong, almost masculinely heavy bones, was livid now in the torchlight. The face showed the woman's weariness that pulled her down, drained her and withered her from within. The dark eyes were luminescent with unshed tears and the mingled conflict of hope and disbelief.

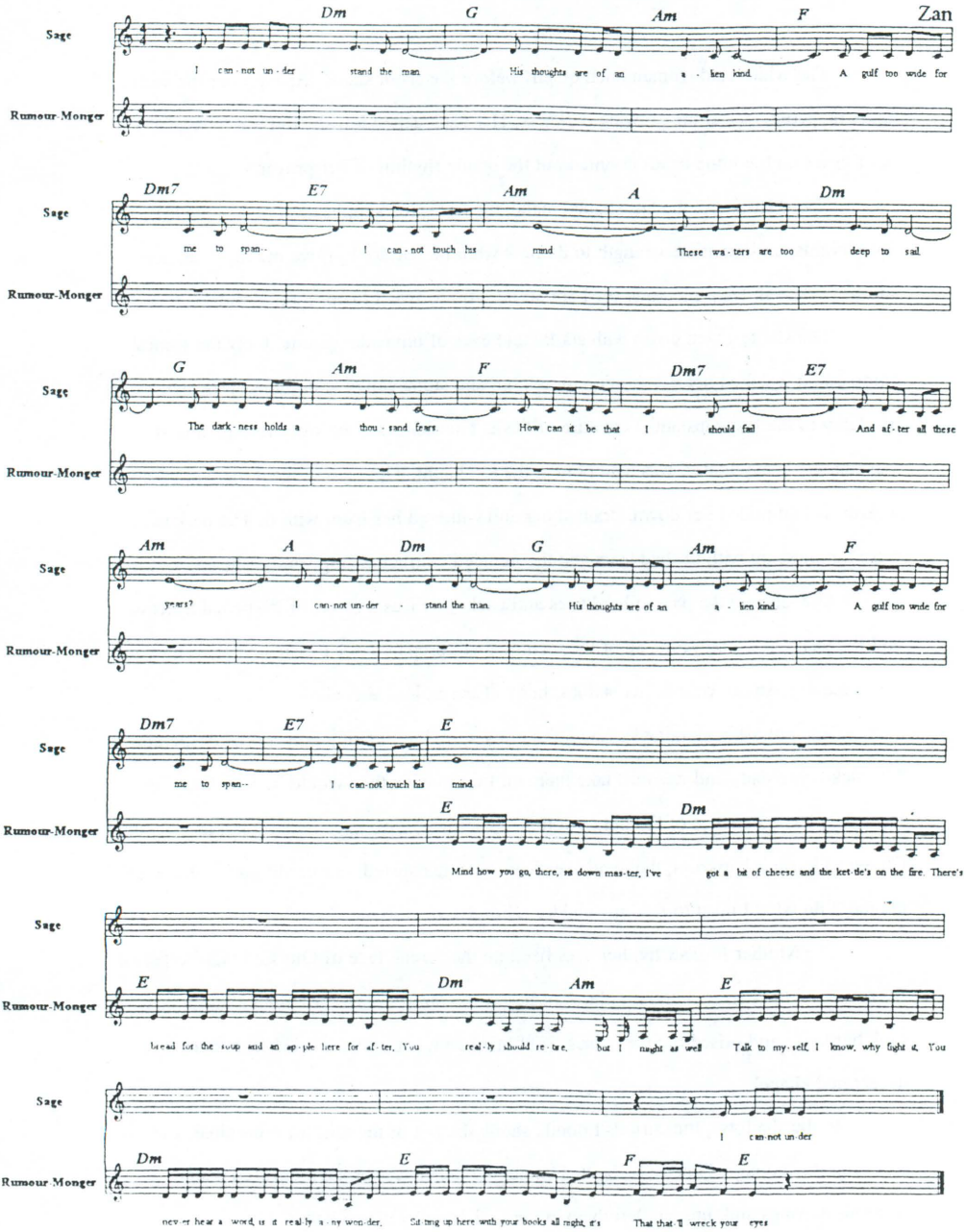
She ignored the pain in her knees and back. She was a Sister of Perpetual Sorrow and the years, the long years, all of them empty, had prepared her for such vigils. The Lady was a harsh mistress, cold as her statues, her will as resolute as rock.

"I'm not asking a miracle, Lady, I'm not stupid, but our situation is now desperate. The sick come daily and we must take them in. Left outside they would be killed for sure. Here they have a chance of life but...but there is no more...we have nothing left to give, our Chapter House is bankrupt, the medicines have been exhausted, our credit gone. I have no choice. I do what I must to feed my children. Forgive me this sacrilege."

The Mother rose stiffly, her eyes fixed on the serene face of Our Lady Of Perpetual Sorrows and the perfect blind sapphires of her eyes. Carefully, with trembling hands, she took her knife and prised out the stones. Half blind with tears, she hurried from her desecrated chapel.

In the shadows, the curious Loonite shook the last of the rain from his cloak and surveyed the damage. Quietly, as he had come, the unbeliever broke the paired diamonds from his earrings and, unseen, left them in the Lady's outstretched hands.

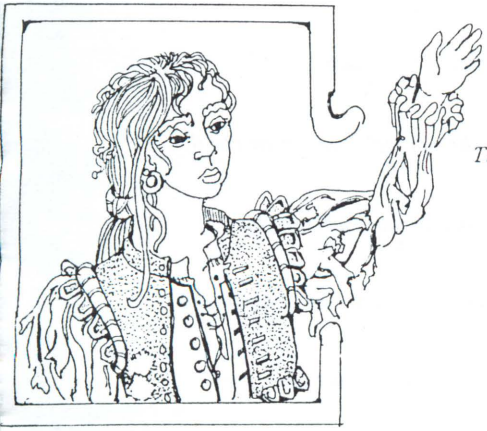
I CANNOT UNDERSTAND



I CANNOT UNDERSTAND

(Words and tune by Zan: a Before The Dawn song)

Dm G
I cannot understand the man.
Am F
His thoughts are of an alien kind.
Dm E
A gulf too wide for me to span--
Am A
I cannot touch his mind:
Dm G
These waters are too deep to sail.
Am F
The darkness holds a thousand fears.
Dm E
How can it be that I should fail
Am A
And after all these years?
Dm G
I cannot understand the man.
Am F
His thoughts are of an alien kind.
Dm E
A gulf too wide for me to span--
E
I cannot touch his mind.



I cannot understand the girl:
She said my fee was far too high.
And yet I did not charge at all--
I simply asked her why.

E
Mind how you go, there, sit down master,
Dm
I've got a bit of cheese and the kettle's on the fire.
E
There's bread for the soup and an apple here for after,
Dm Am
You really should retire, but I might as well
E
Talk to myself, I know, why fight it,
Dm
You never hear a word, is it really any wonder,
E
Sitting up here with your books all night, it's
F E
That that'll wreck your eyes.

What fear was it that ruled her mind?
Why should she be afraid of me?
Within this dark that holds me blind
What monsters can she see?

See what I mean, now that's the problem,
You never even listen to a word I say, here's
Me nearly off my head with worry and
You shrug it all away, I don't know
What you would do if I just absconded,
Starve in a week or two, I shouldn't wonder,
Still, I suppose we're too well bonded,
What would I do alone?

I only try to help and heal
The players in this twisted game.
I grieve for all the pain they feel:
I do not look for blame.
Her ruined hand and haunted eyes,
The way she flinched and turned away--
Dm B
I who am held so wise, why can I not surmise
E
The part she has to play?

Dm G
My heart is weighted down with pain.
Down in the dumps, it's not surprising, guess what I heard last night?
Am F
I cannot fathom out this coil.
Out by the tower a bunch of reivers got into a fatal fight.
Dm E
Nor can I see the slightest gain
Slight possibility it could be the princeling, me I rather doubt it, still...
Am A
In all my mental toil.
You drink your tea now, I'll shut the window, draughts only make you ill.
Dm G
And ever since the old king died,
Old fool never knew what they were up to, pigheaded just like you.
Am F
A fear has lain on all the land.
All right for him though, he got his own way, more than some of us can do.
Dm E
There is no good in either side:
I'm off to bed now, come when you want to, just try to get some sleep.
Am
I cannot understand.

Kayli, Harad of the Clanley Safe House on Salak, stretched and stood up. "You should have called me earlier..." she began, then paused, noting the startled expression on the Sister's face. "What's wrong, chiri? Tell me."

"We don't know, Kayli, truly we don't. Mother is sending for the Consolidator."

"What! For Life's sake, why? It can't be that bad, can it? I mean I know you're short of money, but--"

"No, it's not that. Frankly, it's far worse..."

"We're being closed down? They can't! What would the people do without you? No--"

"Kayli, please listen..."

Kayli sat down, waiting. Sister Dierdra sat beside her, clutching her beads. She licked her lips nervously, trying to compose herself before she spoke; instead it made matters worse. Tears sprang to her eyes and spilled over on to her face. She was a young Sister, one of the few native Fringers still serving in this Chapter House. Kayli knew her. Sister Dierdra believed, with all her wild compassionate soul. Patiently the Harad waited till the other woman was ready.

At last she said, "Last night Mother did as you suggested."

"What! She did? Oh, gods, things are really that bad? Oh, Dierdra, I'm sorry..."

"She took Our Lady's eyes and gave them to UrLord Vanhorska the gem-merchant and he said, he said they were worth two thousand credits, that's under five solaRams. He promised to arrange credit for us, he even waived the valuation fee."

"That was generous of him."

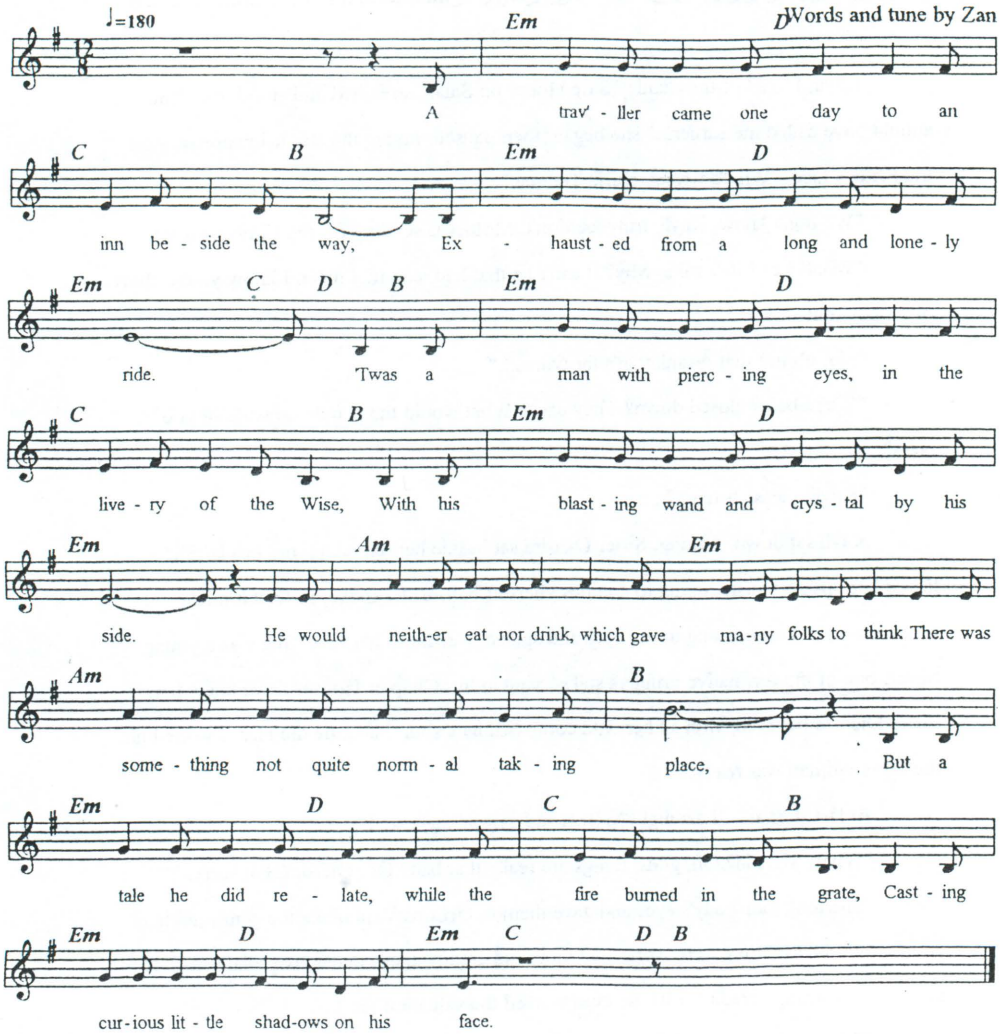
"Yes. It was."

"So?"

Sister Dierdra looked up, bewildered, and met Kayli's uncomprehending concern.

"So, this morning, at matins...we...there were...we found two diamonds, like tears, just lying there in her hands!"

TRAVELLERS' UNREST



(IT'S) TRAVELLERS (LIKE YOU WHAT CAUSE) UNREST

(Words by Zan, tune: "Travellers' Rest" by Mike Whitaker)

Em D C B
A traveller came one day to an inn beside the way,
Em D Em
Exhausted from a long and lonely ride.
Em D C B
'T'was a man with piercing eyes, in the livery of the Wise,
Em D Em
With his blasting wand and crystal by his side.
Am Em
He would neither eat nor drink, which gave many folks to think
Am B
There was something not quite normal taking place,
Em D C B
But a tale he did relate, while the fire burned in the grate,
Em D Em
Casting curious little shadows on his face.

[And this is what he said...]

"The towns and farms round here, were by demons plagued one year,
Which were causing people terror and alarm.
So the locals sent us word, and the Council duly heard
That a mage had gone to keep them safe from harm.
He boldly ventured forth to that tower in the north
And with spells repelled the fearsome demon hordes.
But demons can be sly, and we feared that he might die,
So we furnished him with potent magic wards."

[He paused, and then went on...]

"A month ago one night, I saw a dreadful sight
In my crystal as I sat alone and scried.
The wizard fought in vain, and at last was cruelly slain
By one to whom his wards were open wide."
Here a deeper voice broke in: 't was the keeper of the inn,
With a glint of gallows humour in his eye.
"Well, now I understand what brings wizards to this land.
Perhaps the missing piece I can supply."

[And this is what *he* said...]

"My young brother was obsessed with going on a quest
And fighting for the right with shield and sword.
He would hang around in bars, showing off his practice scars
And buy every bit of gear he could afford.
But his luck ran out one day, when a woman dressed in grey
Took him on to ride with her and right a wrong. (Ha!)
And the thing that then occurred, you may perhaps have heard
As a cute and rather nasty little song."

[He spat into a corner, and continued...]
"The woman, who, I judge, was a demon with a grudge,
Had a way to pierce the wards around the mage.
But the secret that she knew she didn't tell the other two,
Leaving them without a hope to face his rage.
Then the song herself she wrote, for all demons love to gloat,
And perhaps that may be her Achilles' heel;
Let me share the facts with you, which is more than she would do,
And my brother's killer's fate I plan to seal."

["What do you mean?" said the wizard.
"Listen..." said the innkeeper.]

"I may not be of the Wise, but I've got a brain and eyes,
And I've watched this demon closely since I came.
Her wards are very stout, but I have sussed them out,
And I know that we can crack 'em just the same.
She is powerless to harm, with weapon or with charm,
One who sings alternate lyrics to her tune... [pause]
So, wizard, shall we go, for I think she ought to know
That the tower will be free again quite soon!"

"You do know what you have done, don't you?"

The Loonite opened one bleary eye, groaned at the light and rolled over. "Ergha!"

The old trader had no time to waste on sympathy. He bent down and pulled the crumpled wreck of a body out from under the Taverna's scorched table. "I said," he repeated, "you do know what you've done, don't you? Mer, damn you, wake up!"

The corpse revived enough to groan and make feeble efforts to crawl back into its hole.

"Mer!" Rowney Down shook his disreputable ward once more. "Mer, blast you to hell and back, wake up!"

"I'm dead."

"You will be when I've finished with you, you ungodly mismatched heathen!" Rowney pulled again, to little avail. "You despicable, sacrilegious lunatic! You drug-addled, pea-brained suicidal maniac! Get up! Go on, get up! Why I waste my time with you I do not know. If it wasn't for the favour your father showed me I'd turn you over to your uncle right this minute and let him deal with you!"

"Ow!"

"Get up!"

"I can't. My head's missing." The youth groped feebly at his skull.

"Your brain's missing, more like. Get up, or do you want every Scat in the Scald to know you're down here?"

"Ugh." Mer's stomach rebelled, his vision doubled and he suddenly knew he was going to die this time. He shivered uncontrollably and collapsed into Rowney's outstretched arms.

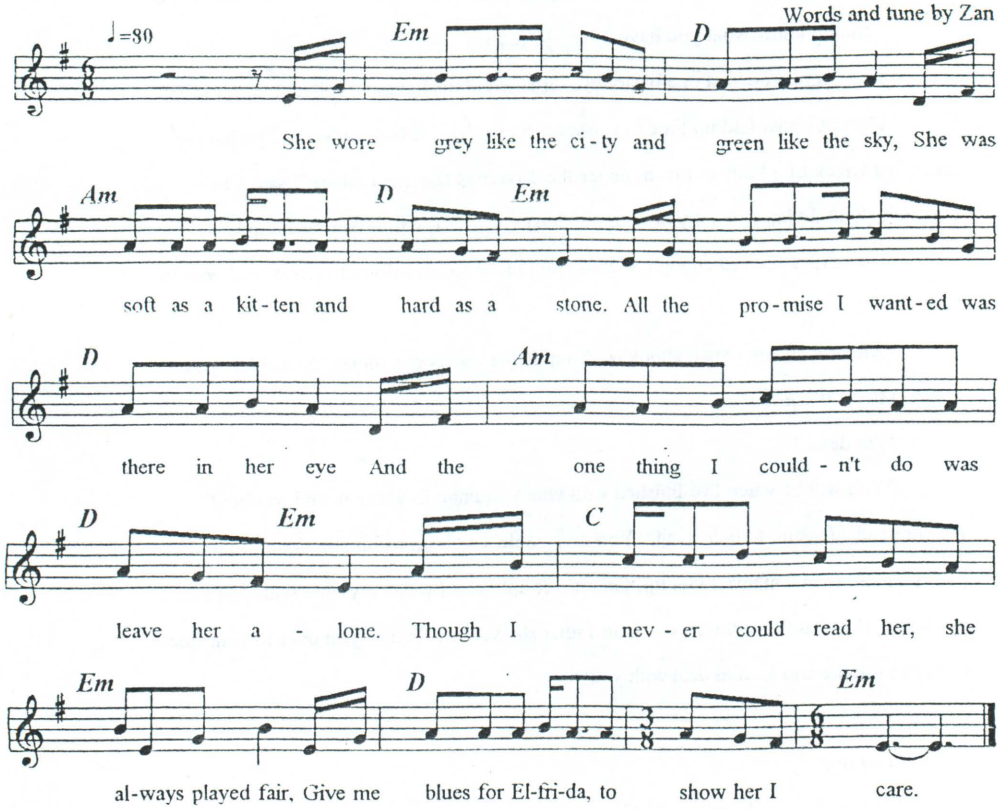
"Is Severin very mad at me?" he asked when the room eventually slowed down to a gentle tidal sway.

Rowney shook his head in exasperation. The boy obviously did not know, did not realise the consequences of his actions, or even remember them.

"Oh," Mer was saying. "I seem to have lost my earrings."

BLUES FOR ELFRIDA

Words and tune by Zan



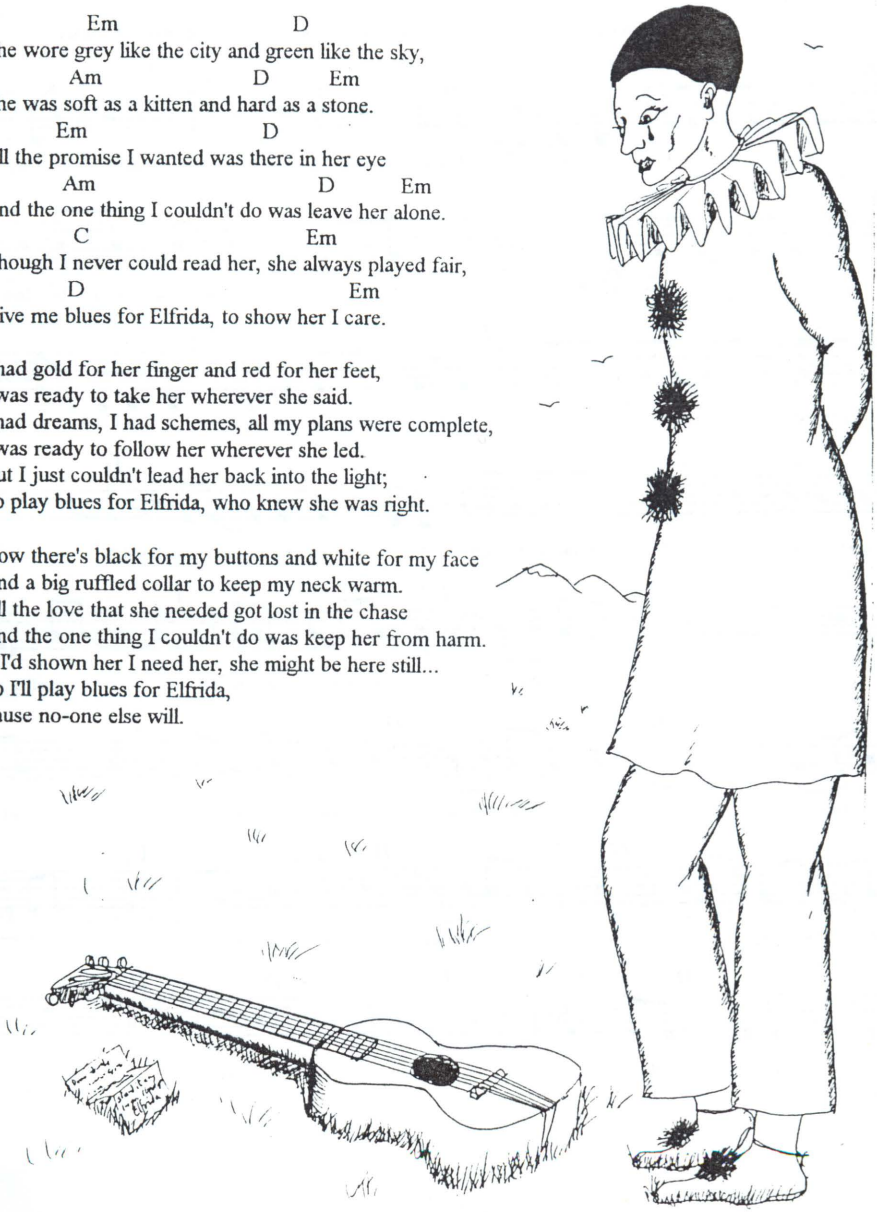
BLUES FOR ELFRIDA

(Words and tune by Zan)

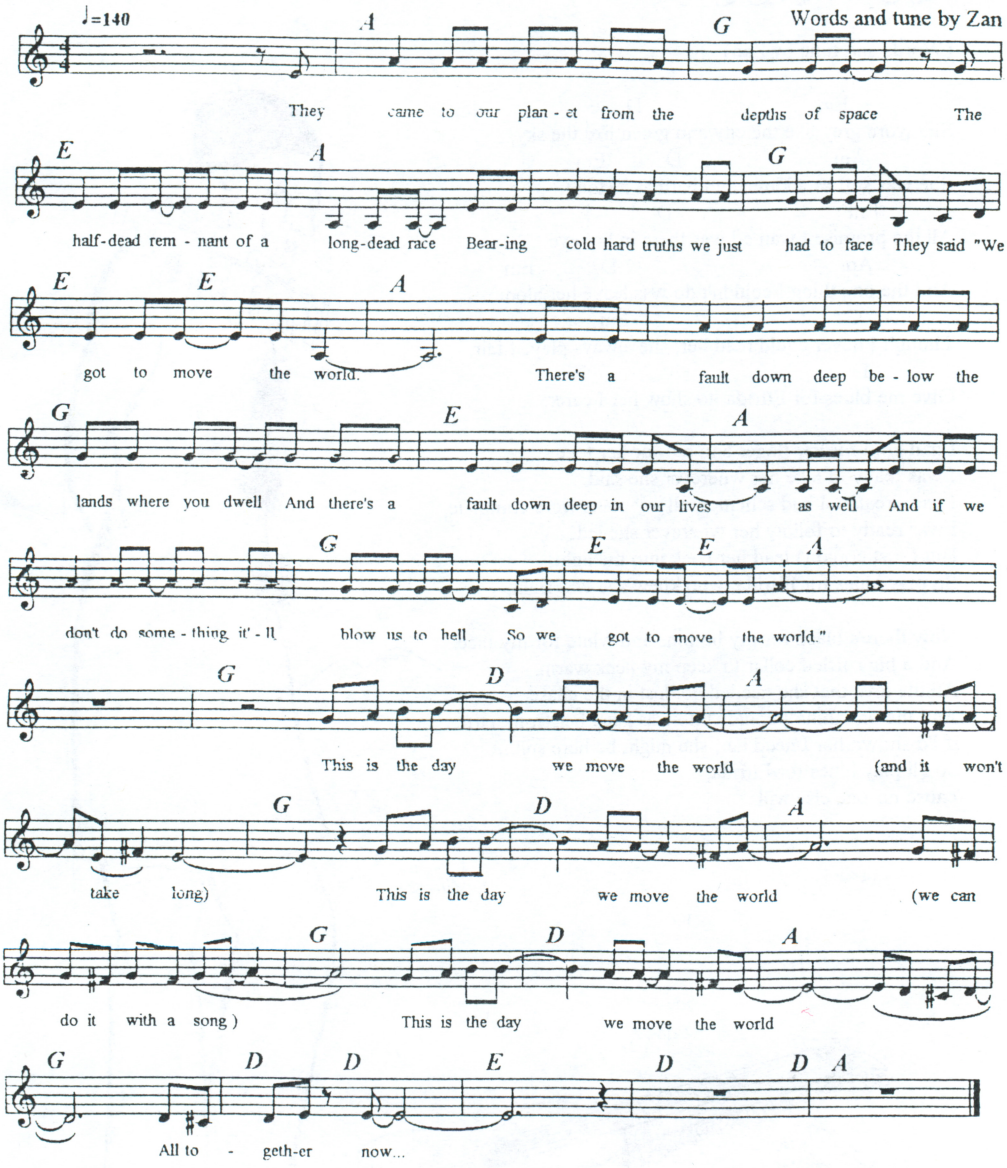
```
          Em                    D
She wore grey like the city and green like the sky,
        Am                  D       Em
She was soft as a kitten and hard as a stone.
      Em                    D
All the promise I wanted was there in her eye
        Am                          D       Em
And the one thing I couldn't do was leave her alone.
         C                          Em
Though I never could read her, she always played fair,
        D                           Em
Give me blues for Elfrida, to show her I care.
```

I had gold for her finger and red for her feet,
I was ready to take her wherever she said.
I had dreams, I had schemes, all my plans were complete,
I was ready to follow her wherever she led.
But I just couldn't lead her back into the light;
So play blues for Elfrida, who knew she was right.

Now there's black for my buttons and white for my face
And a big ruffled collar to keep my neck warm.
All the love that she needed got lost in the chase
And the one thing I couldn't do was keep her from harm.
If I'd shown her I need her, she might be here still...
So I'll play blues for Elfrida,
'cause no-one else will.



MOVE THE WORLD



MOVE THE WORLD

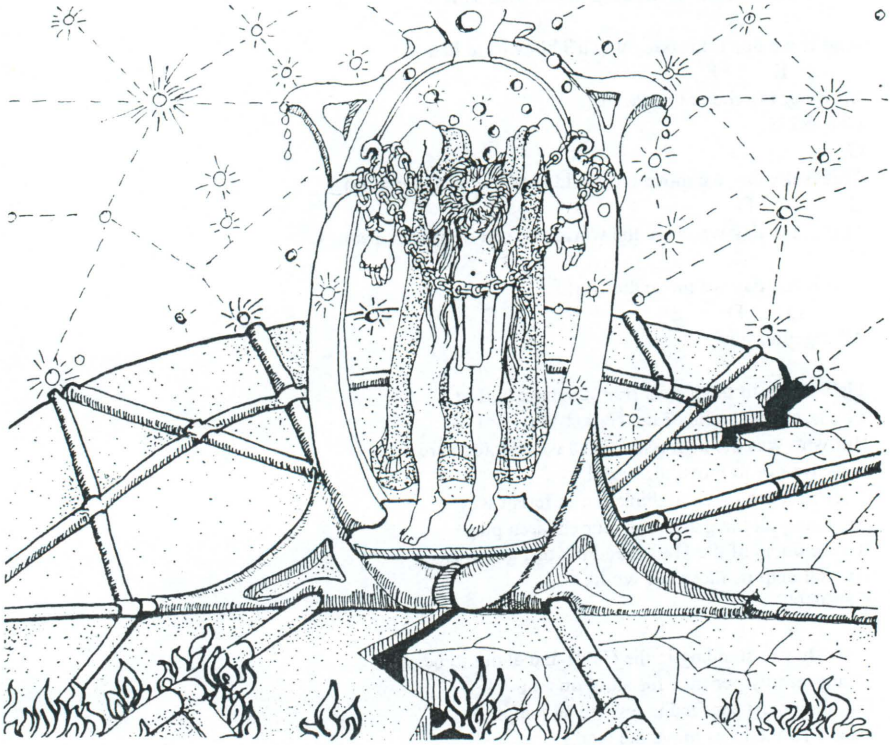
(Words and tune by Zan: inspired by the Countess's Mershane stories)

A G
They came to our planet from the depths of space
E A
The half-dead remnant of a long-dead race
A G
Bearing cold hard truths we just had to face
E E A
They said "We got to move the world.
A G
There's a fault down deep below the lands where you dwell
E A
And there's a fault down deep in our lives as well
A G
And if we don't do something it'll blow us to hell
E E A
So we got to move the world."
CHORUS
G D A
This is the day we move the world (and it won't take long)
G D A
This is the day we move the world (we can do it with a song)
G D A G
This is the day we move the world
D D E D D A
All together now...

They're kin to the ghosts from the time before
The last great battle of the Harket War
But who was the aggressor? Well we ain't too sure
Now we got to move the world.
They're teaching us to think in a different way
Changing all the games that our children play
It's the curse of the Harket and it won't go away
But it'll help us move the world.
CHORUS

Now they're standing in the Circle and about to begin
Doing deadly penance for all of our sin
But they can't succeed unless we all join in
Won't you help us move the world?
Yes I know it's scary but you got to be brave
If we fail this planet could be our grave
There's a job to do, and there's lives to save
Come and help us move the world.
CHORUS

Coming back to life, coming back to pain,
Coming back to our own separate souls again,
And we know somehow that it was not in vain
That today we moved the world.
We'll remember this day until the day that we die
Every time we touch the earth or take a look at the sky
How an alien brat taught the Blaine how to try
On the day we moved the world.
CHORUS
This is the day we moved the world
This is the day we moved the world
This is the day we moved the world
All together now...(repeat CHORUS)



Severin Torrent put down the report.

He waited a moment, timing his next move for the best dramatic effect. Slowly, he looked up. His expression was one of carefully schooled patience, his gaze conveying mingled curiosity with general bemusement. The individual under his benign scrutiny shuffled uneasily.

"Well?" Commander Torrent inquired genially. The interviewee met his enquiring stare with disquieting calm, even though there was an air of doom about him.

"So?"

"You mean 'Yes', I take it?"

"So." This time Mer nodded to reinforce his agreement.

"A civilised man would say 'Yes.' I happen to know you have neither a speech impediment nor a lack of intelligence. I will, however, leave that habit alone for the moment." He paused, trying to convey the seriousness of the problem which lay before him and knowing that he would fail. Mershane's cultural background blinded him to so many things Urthan which to everyone else were obvious.

Mer, for his part, relaxed. Severin was not really angry with him after all. "So?" he said again, standing at ease, managing to look as placid and assured as any cat with its owner; only his eyes betrayed something of his continued nervousness. He was being reprimanded and he knew it, even if he did not yet understand what he had done wrong.

"You will by now be aware of a certain 'happening,' an unforeseen event that has caused a state of near-panic among the populace of this planet."

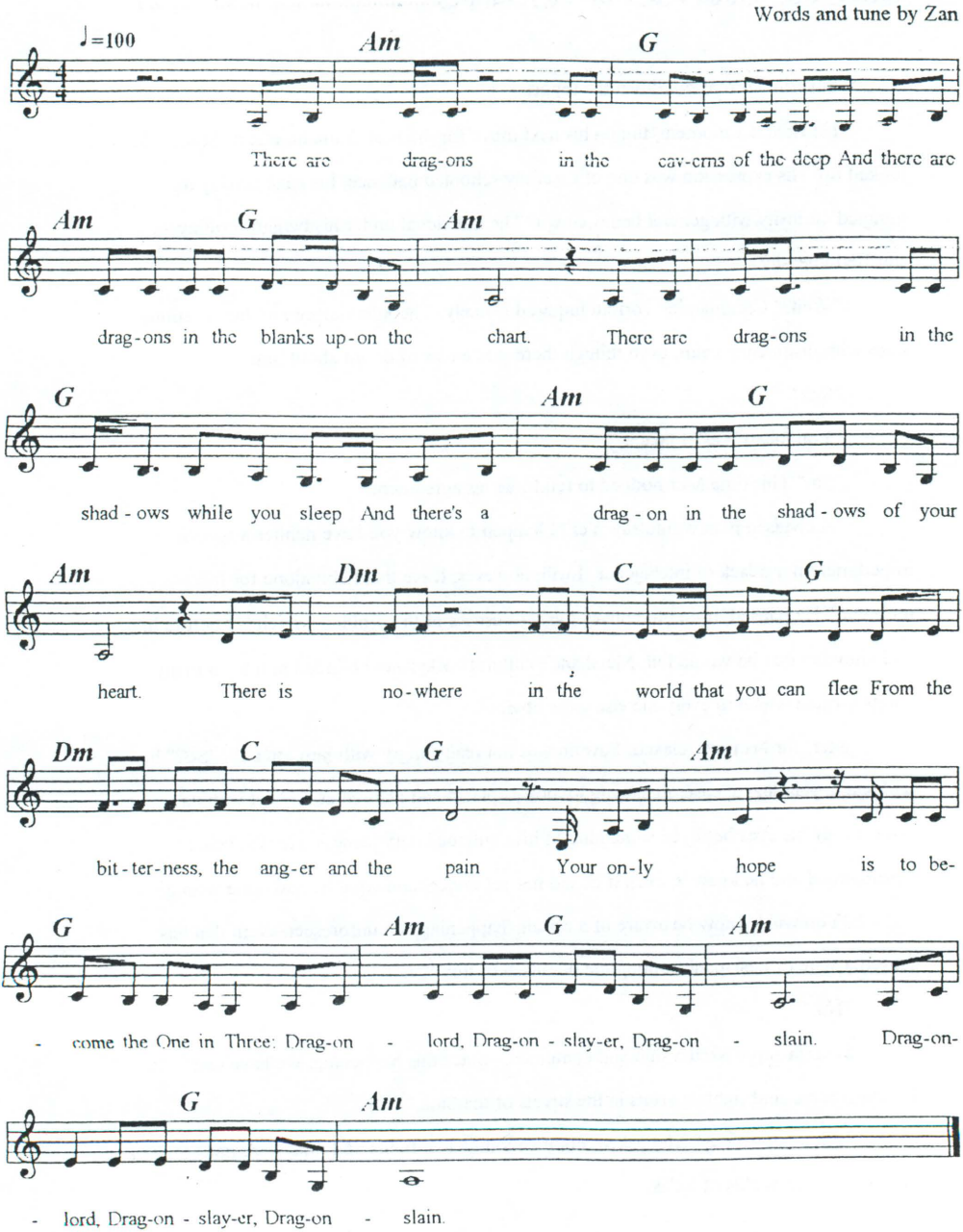
"No."

Severin suppressed a sigh and continued. "Since this happening, we have had demonstrations and fighting--riots in the streets of the Sink."

"What happened?" Mer asked, not mentioning that fights and riots were not unknown in the Scalds of Salak.

DRAGON BALLADE

Words and tune by Zan



DRAGON BALLADE

(Words and tune by Zan: inspired by the Countess's Mershane stories)

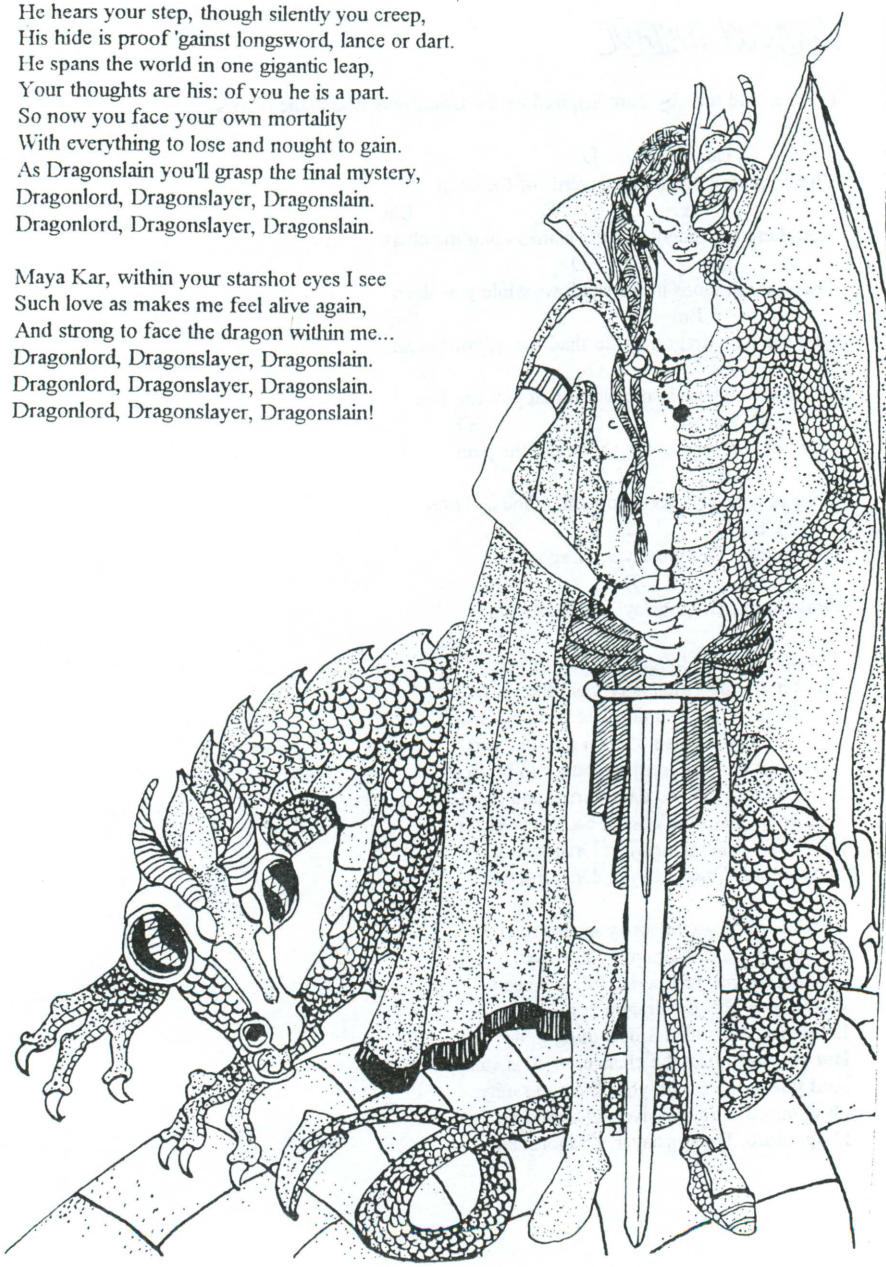
```
          Em            D
There are dragons in the caverns of the deep
                Em          D              Em
And there are dragons in the blanks upon the chart.
          Em            D
There are dragons in the shadows while you sleep
                Em          D              Em
And there's a dragon in the shadows of your heart.
        Am              G                D
There is nowhere in the world that you can flee
        Am              G            D
From the bitterness, the anger and the pain
          Em          D
Your only hope is to become the One in Three:
      Em            D            Em
Dragonlord, Dragonslayer, Dragonslain.
      Em            D            Em
Dragonlord, Dragonslayer, Dragonslain.
```

There is mastery to gain if you can keep
Tight hold upon the anger from the start.
But the price of such dominion can be steep
For this dragon was not born to pull a cart.
You must bear its constant battles to be free
If as Dragonlord you dare to rule and reign,
And you'll learn the cost of each new victory:
Dragonlord, Dragonslayer, Dragonslain.
Dragonlord, Dragonslayer, Dragonslain.

That everything you sow you also reap
Is a lesson that the dragon will impart.
And surely you will perish like a sheep
Unless you best the dragon at his art.
Dragonslayer is the hardest thing to be
But you must take the chance, or all is vain,
And you gamble with your life and sanity:
Dragonlord, Dragonslayer, Dragonslain.
Dragonlord, Dragonslayer, Dragonslain.

He hears your step, though silently you creep,
His hide is proof 'gainst longsword, lance or dart.
He spans the world in one gigantic leap,
Your thoughts are his: of you he is a part.
So now you face your own mortality
With everything to lose and nought to gain.
As Dragonslain you'll grasp the final mystery,
Dragonlord, Dragonslayer, Dragonslain.
Dragonlord, Dragonslayer, Dragonslain.

Maya Kar, within your starshot eyes I see
Such love as makes me feel alive again,
And strong to face the dragon within me...
Dragonlord, Dragonslayer, Dragonslain.
Dragonlord, Dragonslayer, Dragonslain.
Dragonlord, Dragonslayer, Dragonslain!



"The Consolidator himself!"

"So they say."

"Here? On Salak? I don't believe it!"

"Left Homeworld Ur immediately."

"No."

"They say Torrent 'summoned' him. Summoned him to come here."

"They say a lot of stupid rot. No-one summons a Religious, let alone a Consolidator."

"Torrent's Security."

"So what?"

"So you know anyone who could resist a 'request' from Security?"

"That's not--"

"Shut up, I want to hear what happened if no-one else does. Go on, Sharky."

"He arrived three days ago, very quiet. Up at the Residency even now. Had the Mother Superior up there with him five hours..."

"That rings true. Can't see the Consolidator going to that hospice, no sane healthy man would!"

"I said--"

"I know, you want to hear. So who's stopping you? Tell it, Sharky."

"Still no answer. She admits taking the eyes, you know those big sapphires set in the Lady statue. She said--damn it, she can prove the chapel was locked up, and as Pleshavar says, no sane man would break in there..."

"No sane man would leave stones like that, man. I heard they were worth thirty thousand solaRams!"

"That's what they say. I've heard it at twice that. You're right. No sane man would donate that much."

"And ain't that exactly what them Sisters have been saying?"

ALCHEMY

Words and tune by Zan

♩=180

COUNTER-CHORUS

F C

Take the wa - ter to the earth Let the air a - wake the fire Bring the Serp-

Ab F Db

- ent's Egg to birth Thrice-Great God, grant our de-sire. As the circ - le meets the square As the Child

Ab C Dm

of Light breaks free Fire and Wa - ter, Earth and Air Change, com-bine and work in me.

Dm VERSE 1 Bb Dm

Know your-self- - for your-self is all that you can own

Bb

As dull as lead- - a - wait-ing the touch of a mag-ic

Dm Bb F

stone If a spark of am-bi - tion glim-mers

Gm Dm Bb F Gm Am

some-where in your soul Then the time has come To set out on the quest To be one

Bb C F CHORUS C

with the whole Al - chem-y- - is more than the search for the heart's de-sire

F Ab F

Al - chem-y- - is purg-ing your-self in the re - fin - er's fire Al - chem-y- - is

Db Ab C

giv-ing up all that you've ev - er known Till you stand a - lone On the edge of e-

Dm

- tern - i - ty.

ALCHEMY

(Words and tune by Zan)

COUNTER-CHORUS
F C
Take the water to the earth
F
Let the air awake the fire
A
Bring the Serpent's Egg to birth
F
Thrice-Great God, grant our desire.
D
As the circle meets the square
A
As the Child of Light breaks free
C
Fire and Water, Earth and Air
Am Dm
Change, combine and work in me.

Dm Bb Dm
Know yourself--for yourself is all that you can own
Dm Bb Dm
As dull as lead--awaiting the touch of a magic stone
Bb F Gm Dm
If a spark of ambition glimmers somewhere in your soul
Bb F
Then the time has come
Gm Am
To set out on the quest
Bb C
To be one with the whole
CHORUS
F C
Alchemy--is more than the search for the heart's desire
F A
Alchemy--is purging yourself in the refiner's fire
F D
Alchemy--is giving up all you've ever known
A
Till you stand alone
C Am Dm
On the edge of eternity.

Dare the trial--for the only foe is your own fear
The iron law--will show your choices sharp and clear
And I say it were better to rush on my sword and die
Than make the attempt
With fear in your heart
And be caught in a lie
CHORUS

Will the change--let your spirit grow in craft and power
The silver cord--will guide you in the darkest hour
Work till your body screams and your mind is about to give
For the goal is far away
And you're nearest to death
When you're starting to live
CHORUS

[Spoken]
As above, so below,
As it was in days of old,
The path is clear for those who know
We speak of more than lead and gold.
With perfect love and perfect trust
I seek the truth to set men free,
Blend holy fire with mortal dust--
Now, as my will, so mote it be!

Be silent now--let your footsteps fall without a sound
The golden mean--will help you hold to what you've found
For the path of power is a quiet and gentle way
Suggesting, hinting
And bringing the truth
To the light of the day

CHORUS II
Alchemy--is more than the search for the greater good
Alchemy--doesn't lead to the goal that you thought it would
Alchemy--will take you and shape you and put you to the test
Fm
And the end of the quest
Db
Is to give up the quest
Bbm
And then you will see
F Eb/F (alternate to end)
Eternity...
Alchemy...
Alchemy...
Alchemy...

The Consolidator of the United Church of Ur was by tradition male: in this case, in fact, the opposite was true. Carmina Lowzerin had been Consolidator thirteen years now. Before that she had served five years as Assistant Consolidator to Homeworld, after serving eleven years as Provider General of the Greathouse of the Order on the same planet. Before that she had been Mother General for twelve years, and before that, when she cared to remember, she had done her small part as Mother Superior of six separate hospice convents. It seemed she had been part of the Church all her long life, and, apart from the first sixteen years in the Fleet Orphanage, she had. She knew the Church from all sides, knew the faithful and those who died denying faith to the very charity that eased them gently into oblivion. More terrible than all these, she knew the political uses the Elite had discovered for the Faith. It had not been easy for the Sisterhood to win rule over their own Order, but now that they had it she dared not let anything upset the tentative hold they now had on autonomy. Not even a miracle.

She unclasped her hands and sat back in the welcoming comfort of the leather chair. She folded her hands under the surcoat of her habit, hiding the rheumatism-twisted fingers from her own sight. She looked up at the men standing before her, her expression once more calm and serene as the violated statue of Our Lady of Perpetual Sorrows.

"You realise," she said at last, "that word has already gone out that this...occurrence... is a miracle."

"We did all we could to contain the news, Consolidator," Severin Torrent assured her as he paced back to his desk and sat down stiffly. "But gossip is impossible to curb in the Fringes."

"We understand that, Severin my son. You are not at fault." Her gaze shifted to settle briefly on the unfortunate Loon whom she did hold responsible. "What we do not understand is why this...this...officer," she said the word with incredulity, "could contemplate such a thing. You're sure he did do it, Severin? I mean, it is a vast amount even in gems..."

"Oh, yes." Severin nodded. "I recognised the stones as soon as I saw them."

USEFUL RHAGAN PHRASES

♩=100

D Em G D

(Spoken) A-ya am R[h]a A-ya am an-luna
(Sung) May life be good to you And may you shine

D Em C D

A-ya am R[h]ai es-ma-ya-'ca
May life bring peace to you For you are mine

C G Bm

A-ya es a[h] E-tiah eir Ruth
From me to you This gift I give

D C Em D

Shear a es darh Ne vah e R[h]a
Come take my all That I may live.

Em G D

A-ya a-'car-lain a-[h]es a ma
One in a thou-sand You are to me

Em C D

c-'ruth c-'ray-tha c dar na sarh A-ya s'am R[h]a
This gift in giv - ing Shall make us free May life be

C G Bm D

Qui-a an-{h}na-ra Te-ai-ra shree
in you That you may shine Share joy for-

C Em D

a-'ca e-sa-may
- ev - er For I am thine Share joy for-

C Em D

- ev - er For I am thine.

USEFUL RHAGAN PHRASES

(Words by Countess Axylides, tune by Zan)

Aya am R[h]a
D Em
May life be good to you
Aya am anhna
G D
And may you shine
Aya am R[h]ai
D Em
May life bring peace to you
es-maya 'ca
C D
For you are mine
Aya es a[h]
D C
From me to you
Etiah eir Ruth
G Bm
This gift I give
Shear a es darh
D C
Come take my all
Ne vah e R[h]a
Em D
That I may live.

Aya a'carlain
One in a thousand
a[h]es a ma
You are to me
e'ruth e'raytha
This gift in giving
e dar na sarh
Shall make us free
Aya s'am R[h]a
May life be in you
Quia an{h}nara
That you may shine
Teaira shree
Share joy forever
a'ca e-sa-may
For I am thine
Share joy forever
For I am thine.

"...Our Lady of Perpetual Sorrows, her eyes like stars,

Wept diamonds down to save her faithful's home.

Our Lady of Perpetual Sorrows heard the prayer

Her children cried in need,

And from the love that she alone may share

Shed tears of wealth beyond mere mortal greed,

A gift of caring, that the poor might know

A gentle resting, and that faith should grow..."

Mer shuddered and dropped a capsule of Blue Dreamer into the white wine he had been drinking. The itinerant preacher glared at him, but never faltered in his tale. As Mer stirred the blue drug into the wine he glanced round; everyone in the Taverna, even the off-duty Scats, were listening to the mad litany. He considered a moment, smiled toothily at the preacher and raised the glass in a silent toast, making sure to spill a drop of the liquor in libation to the Lady. He was still a bit vague as to who the Lady actually was. Her status had never really been made clear to him, despite all Severin's lectures during the past month. The Sisterhood, he knew, took care of the sick and dying for some soul-deep reason Urthans called the Faith. That they were sincere, honest and good he never doubted. That everyone made such a fuss of the gift still confounded him. Diamonds were, after all, just so much pretty rubbish; his home world was awash with them.

He listened to the preacher. He was a passably fair storyteller, but he exaggerated the mystery and left out so many details. Such as the fact that it had been festival night and the streetways had been full of people, a lot of them drunken xenophobic Blaines out for blood, that it had been hot and raining fit to cause a flood. Mer remembered that much, the water slowly soaking through the thin Clanley cloak he had worn, the unbearable closeness of the street, the welcoming cool of the chapel, the pale woman who had watched too much suffering...

Mershane, called Bringer, brought the glass to his lips, remembering her words in the dark, and smiled.

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